western hemisphere as well as the protector of the South American States. The doctrine emphasised the principle "America for the American". It was essentially an indication of the growing self-consciousness of the United States. The Monroe Doctrine raised "the standard of American foreign policy for all the world to see and to plant it so firmly in the national consciousness that no later president would dare to pull it down."

At the time of its declaration, the Monroe Doctrine drew only very little attention from the great powers. Critics of Monroe had pointed out that his message was a mere declaration and that the United States had no military strength to defend the young South American Republics from the European powers. So it was not the declaration, but the power of the British navy that saved the South American Republics from the interference of the allied powers.

In course of time, the significance of the Monroe Doctrine grew immensely. As a dynamic doctrine, it has been wisely interpreted by the subsequent presidents. It enabled the U. S. to interfere in the affairs of the small Republics in the American continent, at the same time preventing other nations to interfere. During the presidency of F.D. Roosevelt, the doctrine was made multilateral and the Latin American States were given share in defining and enforcing the doctrine. In 1962 president John Kennedy used this doctrine against Russia which secured 'Rocket Stations' in Cuba. Today, owing to scientific and technological advancement, the United States is forced to maintain her troops and war equipments in the different parts of the world as a measure of self-defence. She has also formed military pacts and alliances. Even then, they are not against the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine in a wider sense.



**The Era of Good Feelings**

The period of James Monroe's presidency has been deescribed as "*The Era of Good Feelings*". This period saw a remarkable growth in American culture and development in American institutions. It was an age of significant achievements in the domains of art, literature, science and religion. Eminent scholars like Emerson and Irving made their great contributions to American literature during this period. Politically, most of the serious problems faced by the nation, since the revolution were solved by this time. Peace, prosperity and unity prevailed in the nation. "Thus during this period, America could concentrate on its domestic problems of perfecting political and social organisation and of westward expansion with less concern for European standards, ideals and entanglements".

## CHAPTER IX

## JOHN QUINCY ADAMS (1825—'29)

James Monroe was succeeded by John Quincy Adams to the presidency of the United States. He was the eldest son of John Adams, the second President of America. Like his father, J. Q. Adams had a distinguished career in public service. As senator, diplomat and secretary of state, he had rendered his services to the country. Adams

**Foreign Affairs**

Foreign affairs were the special aptitude of Adam He was the mainspring behind the Monroe Doctrin This strained the relations between America and Britai to some extent. His policy towards Latin America w transparently honest and cautious. He wished to mak commercial treaties with them and to encourage the ne nations to observe Republican principles. He also wante them to live at peace among themselves and to discourag them from provoking Spain. With Brazil, Peru, Chil and Argentina he was fairly successful. But, the Britis influence in Mexico and Colombia became a counte weight to the United States in a new balance of power.

**Panama Congress**

The Latin American states which freed themselve from foreign rule decided to convene a conference a Panama in 1824. It was arranged by Simon Bolivar, fo the purpose of urging Spain to recognise the independenc of the new-born Republics of Latin America. It was als suggested that the Congress would reassert the *Monro Doctrine* and the principle of liberating slaves. Adam and Clay wished to make use of the opportunity fo extending the United State's political influence over th Southern Republics. So Adams sent a message to th organisers of the *Panama Congress* announcing the nomi nation of two U. S. delegates to the conference. But, th opposite group led by Andrew Jackson found fault wit the president for giving up the policy of *isolation an neutrality*. They also argued that it was improper on the part of president Adams to depute delegates to the Panama Congress without consulting the senate. After a long and heated discussion, the Congress finally approved the president's proposal and decided to send delegates to



e Panama Congress. But, the victory of Adams was a rren one. One U. S. delegate died on the way and the her reached the venue of the Congress to hear that the eting was already over.

**ll of the Republicans**

Though Adams governed honestly and efficiently, his lministration was marked with frustrations. His years in lice appeared to be one long campaign for re-election d his cold intellectual temperament did not win friends. s a result he was replaced by Andrew Jackson as presi- nt in the election of 1828. Thus by 1828, the Republican rty lost its importance and it gave place to the Demo- tic party under the able guidance of Jackson.

---

## CHAPTER X

# JACKSONIAN DEMOCRACY

## ANDREW JACKSON 1828 – 1836

The period of Jackson's presidency marked a new och in the history of America. It inaugurated the *era of l democracy* in the United States. Jackson was one of few presidents whose heart and soul were completely h the common people. He symbolised the widespread ocratic impulse of the 19th century and his success in election of 1828 was a definite victory of the govern- nt by and for the plain people.

## Early Career

Jackson was born in 1767 on the border regions of Carolinas. He belonged to a *Scotch-Irish* immigrant family. Born and bread up in the midst of misery and hardship, Jackson developed a keen sensitiveness and a lifelong sympathy for the oppressed and the downtrodden section of the society. Jackson was the architect of his own destiny. As a frontier lawyer, planter and merchant, Jackson developed an intense distrust of the Eastern financial organisation which exercised great influence on the western commerce. He took a leading role in the war of 1812 against Britain and earned great reputation as the hero of New Orleans. This popularity took him to the highest rung of the ladder and helped him to get himself elected as the Democratic president of America.

At the time of his election to the presidency, Jackson was a controversial figure. The facts about his early career and personality were folsified and misinterpreted by his opponents. Political enemies portrayed him as a violent barbarian whose boundless actions would endanger American freedom. Cartoonists caricatured him as *KingAndrew*. But Jackson regarded himself as a plain man and the elected representative of the common people who formed the majority of the population. He had "great faith in the common man's capacity for uncommon achievement." He believed in political equality, evenness in economic opportunity and had a strong hatred of monopoly and special privileges. His presidential inauguration in Washington D.C. gave boisterous evidence of the conviction of the people, that they had come in possession of the government. Thousands of common people thronged to witness the great event. Jackson, a tall and lean figure, walked through the crowd escorted



by a company of close friends. After taking his inaugural oath and reading his inaugural address, he pushed through the shouting crowd, all eager to shake his hands. Then he mounted on horse back and rode to the *White House* at the head of an informal procession of carriages, farm wagons, and crowds of people.

## Inaugural Address

In his inaugural address, Jackson pledged himself to economy in government, a proper regard for state rights, a liberal policy towards the Indians and a revampling of the Federal Civil Service. But, the address contained no clear statement of the policy on tariff, internal improvements, the currency or the Bank of the U. S.

## Cabinet

Jackson appointed Martin-Van-Buren, a rising Dutch politician of NewYork as the Secretary of State. The Secretary of War was John Eaton, a close friend of Jackson. The other members of the cabinet were equally drawn from his own supporters and the followers of Calhaun, the vice-president. In addition to the regular cabinet, Jackson had a small body of advisers drawn from the circle of his close friends and favourites. This small group of unofficial political confidants came to be known as the *Kitchen Cabinet*.

## Domestic Affairs

### 1. Spoils System

Jackson's inauguration was followed by the introdution of the principle of rotation into the Federal Civil Service. He enlarged the spoils system. It was the practice of appointing men to the offices of the state on the basis of their party loyalty. The previous presidents had

employed this system to a limited extent. As the Republican party was in power for a long time, the efficiency of the civil service was crippled by the presence of a large number of 'aged and incompetent relics of an earlier day'. Jackson decided to make a largescale removal of such unwanted and inefficient officers. The novelty of Jackson's action lay in the speed in which he made a largescale removal of the followers of the Republican party from the civil service. His motto was "to the victor belongs the spoils". Thousands of departmental officers, numerous postmasters and custom officials were thrown out of employment. Jackson justified his action by pointing out the example of his predecessors like Washington and Jefferson.

**2. The Tariff policy**

The chief subject of controversy during Jackson's first term of presidency was the Tariff. The tariff had regularly been increased in 1816, 1824 and 1828 in order to protect the Northern industries. While the Northern states enjoyed the benefits of protective tariff, the Southern states had to bear the burden of high prices. Southern states like South Carolina bitterly opposed the union's high tariff policy. Businessmen in that state had hoped that Jackson would use his presidential power to modify the tariff laws they had long opposed. When the Congress enacted a new Tariff Law in 1832, Jackson signed it without hesitation.

**3. Nullification Crisis**

Then South Carolina organised a *States' Rights party* which represented those who believed in the principle of *Nullification*. A state convention, especially elected for this purpose issued an *Ordinance of Nullification*. It declared that the Federal *Tariff Laws* were null and void and



were not binding upon the officials and citizens of South Carolina. South Carolina even threatened to secede from the union if the congress passed any law to use force against it.

Jackson's response to challenge to the Federal authority was a strongly worded proclamation to the people of South Carolina. He asserted the sovereignty of the Federal government and declared that "Nullification meant disunion and disunion meant treason". He also appealed to the people of South Carolina to reassert their allegiance to the union. He asked the Congress to pass a *Force Bill* authorising the president to use troops, if necessary, to compel South Carolina to submission. While Jackson had sent the troops to assist, the Federal officials in the collection of tariff, a compromise tariff Bill was presented in the congress. It provided for the gradual reduction of duties on imported articles. Then South Carolina withdrew the *Nullification Ordinance*. Thus the Nullifiation episode was closed with both sides claiming victory. While South Carolina's claims were protected, it proved the ineffectiveness of the *Theory of Nullification*.

**4. Land Policy**

The West expected that Jackson would introduce certain reforms in the national land system. They proposed the sale of western public lands to the settlers at lower prices. The proceeds from land sales were to be used for public works and education. But, the proposal was opposed by the industrial East as it might result in the large scale immigration of industrial workers to the agricultural areas of the West. Senator Foote, a representative of the East introduced a resolution in the Congress "to put a brake on the sale of public land". The Western Senators angrily attacked Foote and his supporters on

consititutional grounds. In the heated debate, Robbert Hayne argued that the states had the right to nullify the unconstitutional laws passed by the government. Then Daniel Webster, a champion of the North declared that "the states could nullify the laws of the Congress only by producing a Civil War". Attacking the disunionist tendencies Webster asserted "Liberty and union, now and forever one and inseparable". Jackson counted himself a state rights man; but he never doubted the sovereignty of the nation. As the agricultural West on the issue of land policy and South Carolina on the question of high tariff were debating, Jackson declared "Our Federal union; it must be preserved." Thus the president emphasised the national point of view.

### 5. Quarrel with Calhoun

Jackson's quarrel with Calhoun, the vice-president which eventually led to the latter's resignation forms one of the interesting episodes in American politics. John Eaton, the Secretary of War had married a bar-maid with the permission of Jackson. But Mrs. Calhoun, a feminine leader of the Washington society refused to recognise Mrs. Eaton. Jackson's efforts to compel recognition met with little success. Then it developed into a political issue. Meanwhile, Jackson had discovered that Calhoun as Secretary of War in Monroe's cabinet had favoured punishing Jackson for ignoring the instructions of Washington authorities during the *Seminole War*. After an exchange of angry letters, the vice-president Calhoun was forced to resign in 1831.

### 6. Bank Policy

Jackson had to engage in a dramatic struggle with the Bank of the U. S. The second Bank of the U. S.



chartered in 1816, was a very useful institution. It provided a safe place of deposit for federal funds and regularised the financial functions. It had aided business activities and reduced the threat of inflation. The U. S. Bank also exercised a healthy control over the functions of the state banks.

In spite of its usefulness, the bank had many enemies who called it a "Monster." Its domination in financial affairs compelled the state and local banks to reduce the issue of notes. The bank was unpopular among the debtor groups especially in the South and the West. It was criticised that the bank represented the interests of a few wealthy people. Most of the high officers of the bank, especially its president Nicholas Biddle, were staunch anti-Jacksonians and they used their power and pelf to safeguard vested interests. Biddle's personal domination in the affairs of the Bank and his identification with conservative interests roused popular resentment against him.

Jackson's annual message in 1829, questioned the constitutionality of the bank and asserted that the bank had failed to establish a sound and uniform currency in the country. Jackson boldly vetoed a bill for its re-charter in 1832 and accepted the challenge of the opposition to make the bank, the major issue of his re-election campaign. After the re-election Jackson interpreted it as a mandate from the people to crush the bank. The weapon lay at hand in a provision of the bank charter which authorised the removal of public funds. Jackson withdrew the Federal funds from the Bank of the U. S. and deposited them in selected state banks which came to be nicknamed the *Pet Banks*. This drastic measure practically destroyed the bank of the U. S.

The immediate effects of this adventurous step w unfortunate. The destruction of the bank of the U left the numerous state banks and other small bunks controlled. Their speculative loan policy and unrestric notes-issue naturally led to inflation and other econom disorders. In order to check this inflation and the reckl issue of paper money, Jackson issued the *Specific Circul* in 1836, which required the use of gold and silver for la purchases. This circular came too late to check the pan which set in as soon as the president left the office.

Jackson's bank policy was a real victory f democratic ideals. It freed busiuess from governme favoured monopoly. As his measures had the backing o people, they were truly democratic in every sense.

**Indian Policy**

Jackson persued a broad policy of extinguishing Indi land titles in the states and removing the Indian population He concluded several Indian treaties which opened Indi lands for American settlements. Tribes-men with well developed farms, especially influential half breeds wer given the option of staying where they were as American citizens. Those who preferred to leave, exchanged thei property for new lands in the West and were promised payment for travel expenses and the value of improve ments for their relinguished property. The assent of the Indians was nominal and most of them were reluctant to leave their original homes. At last they were beaten back to the new lands by the force of the Federal army.

**Foreign Affairs**

Jackson displayed great energy and resourcefulness in the conduct of foreign affairs. When France suspended payment of certain obligations to the United States,



Jackson recommended the seizure of French property and brought her to terms. But, when Texas revolted against Mexico and appealed to the United States for annexation Jackson's wisely adopted a waiting attitude. His relations with Latin America were not upto Adams' standards. Jackson's Secretary of State, Van Buren went so far as to inform the South American states that the U. S. govern ment was not interested in the Monroe Doctrine. The Anglo-American relations improved during the administra tion of Jackson. Jackson entertained no unfriendly feeling towards the nation whose army he had thrashed so soundly at New Orleans. Van Buren, the Secretary of State, in duced the British government to remove all restrictions on American trade in the West Indies. Britain also issued an order opening her colonial ports to American ships. Thus Jackson showed great skill and ability in the admini stration of foreign affairs as well as domestic affairs.

**Jacksonian Democracy**

The period of Jackson's presidency has been described as *the era of Jacksonian democracy.* It resembled Jeffersonian democracy in several ways. Both Jefferson and Jackson had the same basic philosophy i. e. faith in the common man. But Jackson's measures were more democratic than that of Jefferson. While the Jeffersonians believed in the "government of the people and for the people", Jackson believed in the "government of the people, for the people and by the people". Jackson was a firm believer in the capacity of the masses and he became the champion of the rights and privileges of the common man. Both Jefferson and Jackson stood for the extension of franchise; but it was during the administra tion of Jackson that franchise was extended to all adult male citizens. The presidential election was also made

more democratic during the time of Jackson. As a res the members of the *Electoral College* were elected by dir voting instead of benig elected by the state legislatur Jacksonian democracy had a direct tendency towards t extension of the executive powers in its struggle with t Congress, courts and outside. Jackson directly appeal to the people in order to get their support for his reform He boldly vetoed the unpopular bills even though th were duly passed by the Congress. He was also the fi president to use *the pocket veto*.

Jackson was one of the strongest presidents of t United States. He was a man of extra-ordinary talent fine character and great public spirit. He was a self-ma man who rose from poverty to power by sheer dint merit and hard work. His vigorous action and simplici endeared him to the common people. His administrati was noted for the expansion of presidential powers.

NIRMALA COLLEGE
LIBRARY
26818

## CHAPTER XI

# WESTWARD MOVEMENT

The westward movement has been regarded as th central theme of American History down to the end o the nineteenth century and as the main factor in th shaping of American nationality. According to F. J. Turne American History has been in a large degree, the histor



colonisation of the Great West". The existence of an a of freeland, its continuous recession and the advance American settlement westward explain American velopment." The rise of the New West was the most ignificant development in American History in the years mediately following the war of 1812. The westward xpansion gave rise to a number of domestic and foreign oblems in America.

### tory of Westward Expansion

The story of westward movement had begun practi- lly with the first English settlers. It continued some- mes slowly and at times rapidly depending upon a variety f circumstances-diplomatic, commercial and political. he first whitemen who entered the forest regions of the est were hunters and fur-trappers who were noted for eir great skill in opening new paths through the wilder- ss. These men explored the country and brought the ws of its resources back to the East. Then a number cattlemen and miners moved to the West. They were llowed by farmers who cleared the forests and started ltivation. Once a new area had been opened and shown be fertile, it would soon attract men of more sober and bitious type. In course of time, doctors, lawyers, store- epers, preachers, mechanics and politicians found their y to the West in search of 'fresh fields' of fortune.

During the confederation period, the government had deal with the problem of western lands. Owing to the ge scale movement of people towards the West, town- ps were first established in the North West territory. hile Virginia and some other states climbed western ds for themselves, land speculators from Pennsylvania other middle-states maintained that all western lands uld be made the common property of the confederation.

At last, a sort of compromise was reached by wh all the lands north of the *Ohio* were to be organised i new states instead of being controlled by other stat This region North of the *Ohio* and east of the Mississi came to be known as the *North West Territory*.

**Red Indian Trouble**

During the administration of George Washingt the Red Indians encouraged by British Canadian trad encroached the U. S. boundaries and attacked the wh settlers in *Ohio* and *Kentucky*. Then the president de ted *General Wayne* to suppress the invaders. In spite British backing and arms aid, the Indians were forced sue for peace. By the treaty of *Greville* large tracts Indian territories were surrendered to the United Stat

**Louisiana Purchase**

During the presidency of Jefferson, Napoleon plann to establish a huge colonial empire in America and forc the weak Spanish government to cede the vast territory Louisiana to France. As soon as Jefferson came to kn about the Louisiana transaction, he asserted his fi decision to safeguard the interest of the United Stat By tactful and diplomatic negotiations, Jefferson suc eded in purchasing the vast territory of Louisiana fr France in 1803. The acquisition of this vast region tended the U. S. boundary from the Mississippi to t Rocky mountains. Before long, there began a stea movement of people towards the western regions.

**Causes for westward movement**

Many factors helped to accelerate the westwa movement. The planters and farmers of the East mov to the west where they hoped to find new opportuniti as well as a new life. The fertility of the soil in the Ea



was gradually declining because of continuous cultivation. Then the availability of virgin soil in plenty in the West attracted farmers to that region. Some others were attracted by the invigorating and healthy climate of the region beyond the Appalachian. There was a widespread belief that life in the West would be happier and plainer than life in the East. Still some others moved to the West to free themselves "from the madding crowd of the East." There were still others who found an excellent field for capital investment in the west. The war of 1812 further increased the importance of the western territory. The war served greatly to advertise the region and it put an end to the Indian menace. The business dislocations produced by the conflict also stimulated westward migration while the completion of the *Cumberland Road* and the speedy adaptaion of *Fulton's* steam boat to the *western waters* made the trip to the west an easy possibility. Above all, tall tales of the west told with delight by European travellers and American journalists also encouraged westward movement. "Hi-O, away, we go, floating down the Ohio became the song of thousands of migrants".

**Question of Slavery & Missouri Compromise**

The westward flow of population and the rapid expansion of the country with the purchase of Louisiana created new problems to the nation. It became essential to organise the newly acquired regions into states and to admit them to the union. Then the all important question arose *Slavery* or *Non-slavery*". Among the original thirteen colonies seven were free states and six were slave states. During the half a dozen years following the war of 1812 new states like Indiana, Mississippi, Illinois, Alabama etc, were admitted to the union. At the close of 1819 when Missouri applied for statehood, there were 22 states

in the union 11 slave states and 11 free states. Thus the political balance was maintained between the North and the South. So the admission of Missouri created a problem to the congress. The question was whether to admit her as a slave state or a free state. Owing to the bitter controversy, the *congress* was at a deadlock for sometime. Meanwhile another state applied for admission to the union. Then *Henry Clay* of Kentucky arranged a compromise plan. Accordingly, *Missouri* was admitted as a slave state and *Maine* came in as a free state in the union. The congress also decreed to exclude slavery for ever from all Louisiana purchase territory north of the line 36°–30°. This was the famous Missouri compromise. The compromise solved the problem of slavery temporarily.

**Financial problems**

The rapid expansion of the west was not without its unfortunate aspects. As the western pioneers were usually short of funds, they developed the habit of borrowing a large part of the funds they needed from banks. After the disappearance of the First Bank of the U. S. in 1811, all such business fell to the state banks. In the West, these institutions were so careless in their banking habits that they came to be known as *Wild Cattlers*. As it was easy to obtain loans from them, western farmers and speculators made purchase of land far in excess of their needs. This unhealthy situation was abruptly ended by the Second Bank of the United States chartered in 1816. When the Bank restricted notes-issue and compelled the debtors to clear their debts a financial crisis arose in the West. It arrested speculation effectively and forced many farmers to sell their lands at low prices. It caused the great *panic* of 1819. For more than two years, people of the United

...ALA COLLEGE LIBR...



States were caught in the throes of a serious economic depression. As a result, the Federal government passed several laws to provide relief to the western land-owners and farmers. The land Law of 1820 and the Relief Act of 1821 gave much satisfaction to the people of the west and facilitated materially to the transition of that region from depression to normal conditions.

**Further Expansion**

By the middle of the 1830's *Michigan* and *Arkansas* were ready for statehood and settlers had moved into *Texas* which became an independent Republic in 1836 and was added to the union in 1845. The acquisition of *Florida*, Oregen and California etc. further increased the importance of the West. The rapid growth of the country made the western settlers confident and proud. They looked forward to the day when their farms would cover the entire continent. Then the political balance shifted and the leaders of the west began to play an important part in guiding the destinies of the nation.

**Life in the west**

The western settlers were a varied group. Many strains were mingled in the west. There were Scotch, Irish, German, English and men of other origins among the western settlers. Among the early settlers there were hunters and trappers who lived in miserable cabins. As more and more settlers penetrated the wilderness, many became farmers. They brought improved livestock, ploughed the land skilfully and sowed productive seed. Some erected flour mills, saw mills and distilleries. They laid out good highways, built churches and schools. Doctors, lawyers, merchants, preachers and politicians also came to the West. In course of time, towns, cities and trading centres grew up in the western regions. In the

West, men were valued not for family background, or inherited money or education; but for what they were and could do. An American Journalist Horace Greeley exhorted the young men," Go west and grow up with the country. As they went west, the emigrants carried with them many of the ideals and institutions of the regions from which they came.

**Results of the westward movement**

The westward expansion profoundly affected the whole life of the nation. It led to significant economic, political and social changes in the country. According to F.J. Turner the chief effects of the westward expansion were to promote the formation of a new composite nationality and to decrease the dependence on Europe, to strengthen national unity and to increase the powers of the Federal government, and to stimulate individualistic and democratic attitudes and institutions.

**Growth of Regionalism**

At the same time it may be argued that the steady flow of the population from the East to West artificially led to division of the United States into various regions. The rapid expansion of the West posed a threat to the economic prosperity of the East. This unhealthy spirit of competition between the East and West led to the growth of regionalism and sectional conflict in the country.

**Development of Transport**

The westward expansion natuarally led to the development of agriculture. Gradually new industries and new cities grew up in the West. Then roads and canals were needed in order to carry men and goods across the country. The westerners insisted on the Federal government to make *Internal Improvements* at the expense of the Federal



government. As a result, the *Cumberland Road* with a length of about 600 miles connected Cumberland to Maryland, through the industrial and agricultural centres of Virginia, Ohio, Mississippi, etc. Another important project, the construction of Erie canal, linked the Atlantic and Hudson river with the Great Lakes.

**Imperial Spirit**

The westward expansion gradually gave rise to a spirit of imperialism, disguised in the form of *Manifest Destiny*. Adopting this principle, the United States gradually extended its territory upto the region of Mexico. The southward expansion was completed with the acquisition of Florida from Spain.

**Political changes**

Out of the west came, the new democracy which dethroned the *Virginian dynasty* and revolutionised American politics. Till the rise of the West, American democracy was more or less aristocratic in nature. As the west began to develop its influence was greatly felt in the political life of the United States. It gave rise to a new era of real democracy in the country. The office of the president ceased to be the monopoly of the Virginians. The extent of Western influence was clearly reflected in presidential election 1828. It elected Andrew Jackson who typified the spirit of the new west, to the office of the president.

**Other Results**

The frontier spirit should not be regarded with complete admiration. "The democracy born of free-land, strong in selfishness and individualism, intolerant of administrative experience and education and pressing individual liberty beyond its proper bounds, has its dangers as

well as its benefits." Most westerners thought of themselves primarily as Americans and wanted a strong national government with broad powers for developing transportation and promoting the general welfare. This nationalistic attitude was accompanied by a glorification of American achievements and institutions which often became boastful and aggressive. During the war of 1812 and again during the Mexican war, the demand for an expansionist foreign policy chiefly came from the west. Above all the civil war, which disturbed the nation during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln was also the result of sectional conflict and regional differences.

---

## CHAPTER XII

# VAN BUREN, HARRISON AND TYLER (1836—'44)

### MARTIN VAN BUREN

When Jackson's second term of presidency was about to terminate, the Democratic party nominated Martin Van Buren of New York as its presidential candidate. The political opponents of Jackson had no hope of success so long as they remained divided and worked at cross purposes. So they decided to bring all dissatisfied elements together under the banner of a common party—*Whig*. They wanted *Henry Clay* to be elected to the presidency,



still, in the election of 1836, the *Whigs*, were too heterogeneous a group to unite upon a single man or a common platform. Hence, Martin Van-Buren, who was supported by Jackson won the election.

**Early career**

Martin Van Buren was the son of a Dutch-speaking tavern keeper, at *Kinderhook* in New York. He was a professional politician who had earned great experience in the state as well as in Federal politics. "Little Van earned the nickname *The Red Fox* from his shyness and *The Little Magician* from his ability to turn everything into gold". His election to the presidency made several firsts. "He was the first president born under the stars and stripes, the first of Dutch stock, the first from New-York, the first to step from the governor's mansion at Albany into the White House at Washington".

**Policy**

Van Buren was a shrewd, able and dignified president. He consistently tried to follow the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian principles of democracy. In spite of his fame and popularity, he lacked Jackson's simplicity and popular appeal. He was widely distrusted and misunderstood. The period of economic depression which accompanied his term and the picturesque personality of his predecessor obscured his merits.

**Panic of 1837**

During Van Buren's presidency, the nation suffered from the severe consequences of a great economic depression. At it came all on a sudden, it was known as the *Panic of 1837*. Eversince 1820, the country had been prosperous. So, many people had invested money recklessly in business and on western lands. Speculation increased

enormously. Banks had advanced loans to the landowners and businessmen carelessly. The destruction of the Bank of U S. and the creation of *Pet Banks* during the administration of Jackson had created financial confusion in the country. His order to the *Land office* to accept only *hard cash* in payment for public lands forced the depositors to demand gold and silver coins from banks. As the banks had advanced many loans they found it difficult to have enough *hard cash* to meet all these demands. Meanwhile some of the European depositors also withdrew their deposits from American banks. The people lost their confidence in banks and tried to withdraw all their deposits. This led to the failure banks. Then the depositors lost their savings. Western landowners were forced to sell their land at low prices to clear their debts. Factories were to cut wages or to lay off workers. Adding fuel to the fire, the fall in the price of cotton and the failure of wheat cultivation caused great misery and suffering to the farmers.

**Independent Treasury**

Van Buren and the other democrats felt that the panic was caused by the reckless policies of the Bank of U. S. and other state banks. He decided that henceforth, there should be a complete "divorce between government and private banking." So, Van Buren asked the *Congress* to authorise the issue of Treasury notes to meet the government deficit and to pass an independent *Treasury Bill* allowing the Federal Government to keep its funds in sub-treasuries and making payments from them. Though the first recommendation was adopted, the second which was intended to 'divorce government from Banking' was opposed by the *Whigs*. The struggle for an independent treasury lasted through most of Van Buren's term. At



last, after much controversy, the *Independent Treasury Act* was passed by the congress in 1840. The presidential election of 1840 was held in the midst of the great depression, which adversely affected the fortunes of the Democrats.

**U. S. Relation with Britain**

Besides, financial troubles, Van Buren's administration, witnessed some troubles in the northern border. As the U. S Canadian boundary was not clearly marked, frequent frictions and clashes were taking place in the border regions. In 1837, the Canadians who felt the burden of British rule rose in rebellion against Britain. The Americans hailed the Canadian rebellion as a new American revolution. A net work of secret societies called *Hunters Lodges* pledged to expel the British from North America was formed along the border regions of the United States. They supplied men, money and arms to the Canadian rebels. In December 1837, a small American ship *Caroline*, causing such supplies was burnt by a band of loyal Canadians at the American port of *Niagara*. One American lost his life in the ship. Soon president Van Buren demanded reparations from Britain. But, the latter, refused to pay and ill-feeling grew between the two conntries. After a lapse of two years, a Canadian named Mc Leod, boasted in a New York barroom that he had killed an American in the attack upon *Caroline*. Thereupon he was arrested and the court sentenced him to death. But, the British, foreign Secretary, Palmerston came to the rescue of Mc-Leod. He made it clear, that the attack on *Caroline* was an official attack of Britain over American pirates. He also declared that the execution of Mc-Leod would produce a great war between the United States and Britain. By this time,

John Tyler became the president of the United States. As he was anxious to preserve peace, he settled the dispute by releasing Mc-Leod.

**The New Supreme Court**

Van Buren's administration inherited virtually a new Supreme Court. A number of deaths including that of Chief Justice, Marshall disposed of all, but two of the judges appointed by John Adams and the Virginian dynasty. Jackson was able to appoint a new Chief Justice and four associate judges. Van Buren appointed three more judges in 1837 and this new batch of judges dominated the Supreme Court until the Civil War.

**Failure**

Van Buren's public acts like the ten-hour day for government servants aroused no public enthusiasm. He lacked the compelling qualities of leadership as well as the dramatic flair of Jackson. The election of 1840 found the country afflicted with hard times and low wages. These unfavourable conditions adversely affected the fortunes of the Democrats.

## WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

The election of 1840 was a fantastic one in the history of America. The Democratic party nominated president Van Buren for a second term. The *Whigs* chose William Henry Harrison, a military hero as the presidential candidate. Harrison's victory over the Indians at *Tippecanoe* in 1811 had made him a popular hero. John Tyler of Virginia whose views on states' rights and low tariff were popular in the South, was the vice-presidential candidate. While the Democrats were inactive, the Whigs carried on vigorous propaganda conducting mammoth meetings and torch-light processions. As a result, the Whig candidates



Harrison and Tyler were respectively elected to the presidency and vice-presidency.

## JOHN TYLER

William Henry Harrison, who was sixtynine years of age appointed a *Whig Cabinet* in which Webster became Secretary of State. Before Harrison could accomplish anything beneficial to his party or to the country he passed away in 1841. The presidency then passed to John Tyler, the vice-president.

**Split among the Whigs**

Tylers political views differed fundamentally from those of his colleages. When the Whigs in the Congress voted for a national bank, Tyler boldly vetoed the bill. He also vetoed all bills for *internal Improvements* and harbour works. He accepted an upward revision of the tariff as a necessary measure for the revenue. All these measures roused the wrath of his Whig colleagues who resigned in disgust. His Secretary of State, Daniel Webster stayed on for a few months to wind up an agreement with England that settled the boundary between Maine and Canada. Tyler then appointed Democrats to the cabinet. This became an irrecoverable blow to the Whigs.

**Estimate**

John Tyler was "a good president." An habitual democrat, he was not on good terms with the *Whigs* who had elevated him to the presidency. When the *Whigs* deserted him. Tyler found no difficulty in joining hands with the Democrats. As a man elected by the *Whigs* he had no standing in the Democratic party. Hence he was not re-nominated for the presidency.

# CHAPTER XIII

# THE DECADE OF EXPANSION (1840–1850)

## MANIFEST DESTINY

The great theme of the history of the United States in the 1840's was *Manifest Destiny*. The phrase *Manifest Destiny* was coined by a Newyork; editor John O. Sullivan. It simply means that the United States was clearly destined to extend its boundaries, democratic institutions, and way of life westward to the pacific, northward to the Arctic Sea and Southward to the Isthmus of Panama. If not by war, by colonisation and expansion, the multiplying millions of the U. S. A. were to have a proud Republic whose limits should be the 'Pacific and the Atlantic.' This popular ideology of 'Manifest Destiny' was therefore a *Doctrine of expansion*. The golden age of *Manifest Destiny* was 1840—1850. That decade witnessed the rapid territorial expansion of the U. S., almost doubling its size. The aborption of Texas, the annexation of Oregon, the occupation of California and the South Western countries etc. were some of the landmarks in the episode of the U. S. expansion.

## CAUSES FOR EXPANSION

**1. The desire to settle new lands**

Various elements worked to expand the boundaries of the United States. One of these was undoubtedly the traditional ambition of the Americans, especially the frontier men to settle in new lands. They believed that they had a right to occupy any empty or attractive territory with or without legal title. Owing to the growth of population almost all the Eastern lands had been occupied.



As continuous cultivation had reduced the fertility of those lands, there began a search for fresh fields and virgin soil. It led to a large scale westward movement which was one of the greatest migrations of history. In the words of J. T. Adams, "It was a movement involving tens of millions of individuals, collective, unmoral, akin in all, save its incredible swiftness to the inevitable advance of a glacier".

**2. Consequence of the panic of 1837**

Another important factor which promoted territorial expansion was the consequence of the panic of 1837. The crisis that followed the panic encouraged migration. The sudden and steep fall in agricultural prices adversely affected the cultivators. Moreover the craze for internal improvement as well as the failure of huge canal building projects had increased the debt of the states in the Mississippi valley, compelling them to resort to a policy of high taxation, Owing to the heavy burden of taxes in these states, many a citizen preferred to migrate to new lands.

**3. Patriotism**

Psychological factors also encouraged territorial expansion. The Americans began to feel proud of their freedom, prosperity and democratic government. They believed that it was their *Manifest Destiny* to expand and to extend their benign influence all over America. They thought that such expansion would bring the entire continent and its inhabitants under the blessings of American democratic institutions. Thus patriotism as well as the blind faith in their own greatness and goodness drove many Americans to new territories.

**4. Influence of Pioneers and Traders**

In addition to the economic and psychological factors,

there were other forces attracting migration and expansion to the western lands. For many years, the region west of the Missouri had been branded as the 'Great Desert', unsuitable for cultivation and inhabitation. Hence, the American government had allotted that region to the Indians. In course of time, some of the pioneering settlers and fur-traders brought the news of the richness and fertility of the western regions. Soon enterprising business-men started to these regions for organising fur companies. They were followed by farmers and business-men in large numbers. It naturally paved the way for further expansion to the west.

**5. Santa-Fe-Trail**

Manifest Destiny was further promoted by merchants from Missouri who had opened commercial contact with the natives of Santa-Fe. The Spanish speaking people of Santa-Fe who were separated from the city of Mexico by more than 1000 miles of mountain trails, were eager to purchase industrial goods from the Americans in exchange for silver and fur. The American merchants made gradual progress in their trade with Santa-Fe and from there opened markets in California and New Mexico As a result of these commercial activities, the Americans learned how to conduct their wagons across the western country. They also discovered the weakness of the Mexican authority by establishing contacts with New Mexico and California. These factors also intensified their desire for expansion and kindled their appetite for more territories.

**The Opening of Oregon**

The Oregon country was a vast and extensive territory embracing approximately half a million square miles. It lay to the north of California, between the Rocky mountains and the Pacific Ocean. As early as 1778, James Cook, an



English navigator, had explored the Oregon coast and found there plenty of scope for acquiring large quantities of fur. The presence of the English in Oregon was not an obstacle for the American interests. The first American to plan a colony in Oregon was *John Jacob Astor* who became a leading figure in the fur business. He established the American fur company in 1808 which made remarkable progress. But, he was forced to dispose of all his commercial rights and privileges to the British merchants during the war of 1812. Thus the British *Hudson Bay Company* not only enjoyed the monopoly of fur-trade but also dominated the whole of Oregon. However, the *Anglo-American Treaty* of 1818 provided for the *joint occupation* of Oregon by Britain and the U. S. It was also stipulated that on a year's notice, the joint occupation agreement might be unilaterally terminated. Until 1830, the joint occupation was almost entirely the British occupation of Oregon.

**Missionary activities**

Meanwhile, in the wake of nationalism the Americans began to think of terminating the British control in Oregon. Early in 1830, American missionaries arrived at Oregon to Christianise the Indians. As missionary interest blossomed, they proved more successful in penetrating effectively into the country than the fur-traders. Besides establishing churches and cultivating the land, the missionaries sent back glowing reports on the beauty and fertility of the Oregon country. *Rev. Marcus Whiteman's* account of Oregon was read with intense interest in the East. Soon the nation's eyes were turned towards the Oregon country. Agitation to settle the region was aroused in many circles official and unofficial. Then there began the *'Great Migration'* to Oregon. By 1843, the American community in

Oregon set up a provisional government of their own. The government declared that it would function, until the U.S. jurisdiction was extended in Oregon. Thus *Oregon* became a bone of contention between Britain and the U. S.

**Compromise attempts**

Beginning with the administration of J. Q. Adams, the U. S. government had made repeated attempts to fix the Oregon boundary along the 49th parallel. But Britain was reluctant to surrender the fertile land as well as the profitable furtrade North of Columbia to the Americans. So the Americans decided to solve the problem by the force of numbers. In the presidential election of 1844, James Polk and the Democrats shouted the slogans *"Fifty, Four forty or Fight"*, *"All of Oregon or none"*, etc.

**Settlement**

President Polk interpreted his victory in the election of 1844, as the mandate of the American people to annex Oregon. He gave notice to Britain that the U.S. wanted to end the *joint occupation* and to establish U. S. Sovereignty in Oregon. Polk also re-asserted the noncolonisation principle of the *Monroe Doctrine*. These had the desired effect and Britain agreed to settle the dispute peacefully. By the treaty of 1846, the Oregon was divided between Britain and the U.S. along the 49th parallel. Thus American sovereignty was established over the area now covered by the states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho and the boundary line between the U.S. and Canada was completed from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

**The Annexation of Texas**

Texas had been a province of Mexico beyond the frontiers of the Louisiana purchase. At first, the Mexican government welcomed settlers from the United States,



pioneers like *Stephen Austin* secured grants of land from the Mexican government and settled there. Gradually the number of settlers increased and in 1830, there were about twenty thousand Americans in Texas. But much against the wishes of *Austin* and the Mexican government, the new settlers had brought slavery with them. So Mexico passed a law forbidding further migration from the United States. But it was too late to stop the flood of American settlers and so there was constant friction between the Texans and the Mexican government. Matters came to a head in 1835, when the Mexican dictator, *Santa Anna*, invaded Texas and massacred many Americans. The Texans soon found a leader, in *Sam Houston* who put up a brave fight against the Mexican dictator Santa Anna and succeeded in winning the independence of Texas. President Jackson recognised the independence of the *'Lone Star Republic'* of Texas. But when the Texans pressed for incorporation in the union, the northern states objected it on the ground that it would enlarge the slave territory. Southerners for the same reason pressed for the admission of Texas in the union. So the problem of Texas got involved in the slavery politics of the union and no progress was made for several years.

**Annexation of Texas**

In course of time, the American interests grew in Texas. Rebuffed by the U. S., Texas tried to get financial aid and military assistance from Great Britain. "The British favoured an independent Texas as a balance of power in North America, a buffer state against U. S. expansion, a valuable source of cotton production and a duty free market for British manufactured goods." The British anti-salvery societies hoped that Texas might accede to the abolition of slavery in that state in return

for the British aid. The threat of Texas as a competing source of cotton and a possible heaven for runaway slaves greatly alarmed the southern states. To allow Texas to become a political and economic dependency of a European power would be contrary to the whole tradition of American foreign policy. In the presidential election of 1844, the question of Texas annexation became a vital issue. Polk's victory in the election was interpreted as a mandate of the people for admitting Texas in the Union. So in February 1845, the Congress passed a resolution asking Texas to join the Union. Soon, the Republic of Texas voted to give up its independence and become one of the United States. Thus Texas became a part of the United States of America.

**Expansion into California**

Spain was the first nation, which had started the occupation of the coastal region from Sandiago to Sanfrancisco in California. Early in the 19th century, a number of American farmers were given grants of land in California by the Mexican government. In course of time, traders from New England regularly visited California to buy leather for their shoe-manufacturers and tallow for the candle makers. These visitors brought back the news of the fertile soil and pleasant climate of California. Soon, a large number of American farmers and merchants came to settle in California. The American settlers under the leadership of *Thomas Larkin* desired the inclusion of California in the U S. But, the question of the annexation of California was settled only after the U.S. Mexican war.

**The Mexican War**

The U.S. war with Mexico was one of the significant events in the annals of American history. It was directly



connected to the U. S. programme of expansion. The annexation of Texas roused the bitter opposition and resentment of the government of Mexico. The U. S. attempt to grab California and New Mexico further infuriated the Mexicans. As the Mexico-Texas boundary was unsettled the Mexican government, made attempts to recover the 'rebellious Texas province.' Thus tension grew between the U. S. and Mexico. In order to settle the boundary dispute in a peaceful manner, president Polk sent a minister, *John Slidell*, to the city of Mexico. But, the Mexican government refused to receive the U. S. minister on account of the strong anti-American feeling in Mexico. So President Polk sent the American troops to the disputed border regions. War broke out between the U. S. and Mexico in 1846. The U. S. won the war against Mexico in less than two years.

**Results of the war**

As a rasult of the war, the United States acquired about ten million square miles of new land. Mexico gave up *California* and all the land between California and Texas. The U. S. boundaries extended from the pacific in the West to Central America in the South.

Thus the period between 1840—'50 witnessed the remarkable expansion of the U. S. territory. The government was strong and the country grew in population and wealth. Various industries were developing rapidly not only on the eastern sea board, but also in the fast growing cities of the West. The Americans felt a natural sense of pride and glory in the fulfilment of the 'Manifest Destiny' of their nation. Still unresolved, however, were the basic conflicts rooted in sectional differences, which within the next decade were destined to flame into Civil War.

## CHAPTER XIV

# JAMES K. POLK (1845—'49)

The Democratic National convention which assembled at *Baltimore* in 1844, nominated James K. Polk as the presidential candidate. Quite inkeeping with the pulse of the nation, Polk and the Democrats made expansion of their main campaign issue. "*Fifty-four forty* or *Fight*" and "*All of Oregon* or *None*" were their slogans. The Whig candidate for the presidency was *Henry Clay*. He was well-known as 'a man of compromise rather than a man of courage." The prospect of acquiring Oregon, Texas and perhaps California turned the plain people to the side of the Democrats. So, in the election, the first *dark horse* candidate, James K. Polk defeated the outstanding politician of his time, *Henry Clay* and carried with him into office a Democratic majority in both houses of the Congress.

**Early career and character**

The new president, James K. Polk, a North Carolinian by birth, had served seven terms in the House as a representative from *Tennesse* and one term as the governor of the same state. Polk, whose administration ran from 1845—'49 had neither intellectual gifts nor an attractive personality. "He was a stiff, angular person with sharp grey eyes in a sad lean face." Although he was narrow-minded, unimaginative and suspecious, he had a strong will and a remarkable capacity for hard work. He was a highly conscientious person who firmly believed that it was his first and foremost duty to carry out the will of the people as expressed in his election. He was highly interested in the territorial expansion of the United States.



**His policy**

In his inaugural address, Polk re-affirmed the Democratic platforms declaration that "the annexation of Texas was both a necessity and a right." As for Oregon he declared pointedly that "to us belongs the duty of protecting our emigrants wherever they may be upon our soil." In his message to the Congress he recommended tariff revision and the restoration of the independent treasury. He not only emphasised but also elaborated the *Monroe Doctrine*. He declared that the people of America alone had the right to decided their destiny. The United States would never consent the interference of European powers in the affairs of American states because it might 'disturb the balance of power' in the American continent. He also asserted that the United States would not allow the establishment of European colonies or dominions on any part of the North American continent.

**Polk and the Oregon Treaty**

In spite of the war-like slogans of his campaigners, Polk hoped to settle the Oregon question peacefully. He stood for the extension of U. S. jurisdiction over the Oregon settlers, besides providing military protection to Oregon trail and the establishment of an Indian agency beyond the Rocky mountains." After a period of diplomatic negotiation, Britain signed a treaty with president Polk in 1846. It provided that the boundary between the United States and the British territory in Oregon should be along the 49th parallel. Thus, the American sovereignty was established over a large area of Oregon country and the boundary between the U.S. and Canada was completed from the Atlantic to Pacific. There were some grumblings among the ardent expansionists at the abandonment of the *Fifty-Four fourty* or *Fight* slogan. But, Polk's decision to accept the British offer was obviously a wise one.

**Annexation of Texas** 1845

Texas assumed great importance in American politics during the period of Jacksonian democracy. After throwing off the Mexican yoke, the Texans expressed their keen desire to join the United States. Owing to the opposition of the Northern States, Jackson refused to annex Texas. By that time the Texans established the *Lone Star Republic of Texas*. But the people of Texas never gave up the hope of becoming a part of the United States. The British attempt to exercise her influence in Texas, seemed to be detrimental to the interests of the United States. As an ardent advocate of expansion, Polk regarded "the annexation of Texas as a necessity as well as a right." The presidential election of 1844 proved that a large majority of the states had favoured the immediate annexation of Texas. So in 1845, the *Congress* passed a resolution asking Texas to join the United States. Meanwhile, the Texan government also voted their approval of annexation. Then John Taylor, the retiring president, announced the annexation of Texas in January 1845.

**Polk's Problem**

Shortly after James Polk entered the presidential office, Mexico protested against the annexation of Texas. The Mexican government declared that the annexation of Texas would mean war and it broke off diplomatic relations with the United States. From her point of view Texas was still a rebellious state. So, she took steps to resist the annexation of Texas. In order to protect Texas, James Polk ordered the U. S. General *Taylor* to take the army to the South Western boarder of Texas. He also wished to make use of the opportunity to obtain all the territory West of Texas including upper California. It naturally, prepared the ground for the outbreak of the Mexican war in 1846.



## THE MEXICAN WAR (1846–'48)

The United States' war against Mexico was one of the important events in the annals of American history. The Gospel of *Manifest Destiny* as well as the *Polk Doctrine of Expansion* greatly influenced the United States to declare war against Mexico in 1846.

**Causes (1) Annexation of Texas**

During the admin'stration of Polk, the relation between the United States and Mexico was strained to the breaking points. The U. S. annexation of Texas in 1844, roused the wrath of the Mexican government. Mexico refused to recognise either the fact of Texan independence or the legitimacy of her incorporation into the United States.

**2) Boundary dispute**

Another outstanding question between the two governments was the border problem between Texas and Mexico. The Texans claimed that their boundary was the *Rio Grande*, which would give them control over a large part of New Mexico. The Mexicans on the other hand argued that the River *Nueces* was the south western border of Texas. No compromise was made between the two countries for a long time. Hence the dispute was to be settled by the force of arms.

**3) Mexican failure of payments**

The next important question between the two countries was the failure of Mexico to pay its debts. During the frequent revolutions that occurred in Mexico, a large number of Americans lost their lives and property. In spite of initial reluctance, the Mexican government finally agreed to pay two million dollars to the United States by

way of compensation. As a result of constant civil war and chronic state of bankruptcy, the Mexican government was not able to clear its debts to the United States. So the United States found justification for declaring war against Mexico.

**4) Status of California**

After the annexation of Texas, America turned towards California and New Mexico where a large number of Americans had settled. The American community was greatly fascinated by the prospect of colonising California. Its timber wealth and the fine harbour of *San Francisco* evoked the aggressive interests of the Americans. But California was almost neglected by the Mexican government. The absence of proper schools, courts, police stations, postal system etc. caused great inconveniences to the Americnn settlers in California. The communication between California and the city of Mexico was uncertain and insufficient. The Californians were getting all their requirements from the United States. So, the U S. wished to annex California. But the annexation of California was not as easy as it was done in the case of Texas. The loss of Texas had alarmed the Mexicans to a great extent that they took strong measures to protect their territories. Thus the growing ambition of the United States in California clashed with the firm determination of Mexico to maintain her territorial integrity.

**5) Fear of British intrigues**

While president Polk was anxious to secure California, the British agents in California seemed to take keen interest in the affairs of the province. The president thought that Mexico might sell California to Great Britain. The Mexican government had issued orders for the expulsion of the American settlers and the exclusion of further



immigrants. The U. S. government believed that the British were engaged in intrigues to take California. Polk therefore hoped to arrange a bargain with Mexico by which all the South Western territories would be bought by the United States. Unfortunately the Mexicans had too much national pride and too unrealistic a confidence in their own military strength to consider such a proposition. They believed that the large scale movement of American settlers to Texas had been deliberately planned by the American government in order to annex California. These unpleasant turn of events intensified the ill-feelings between Mexico and the United States.

**) Failure of Slidell Mission**

Before taking strong measures, Polk made an attempt to acquire California and to settle the Texas boundary by peaceful means. In 1845, he sent an American envoy, *John Slidell*, with definite instructions to the City of Mexico, to negotiate a settlement on the following terms. ) The United States was ready to cancel the unpaid debt of Mexico in return for the Mexican approval of *Rio Grande* as the Texas boundary. (2) America was willing to buy New Mexico for 5 million dollars and California for 25 million dollars. But, the Mexicans looked upon the U. S. as an aggressor as well as an open enemy. So, great was the anti-American feeling in Mexico, that not an officer dared to talk with Slidell. Thus, the *Slidell Mission* proved to be an utter failure.

**eclaration of War**

As soon as Polk heard about the failure of the *Slidell Mission*, he came to the conclusion that the only way to absorb California and to settle the Texas question was war. He had ordered the American troops under *General*

*Taylor* to occupy the disputed region between the *Rio Grande* and the *Nueces*. The Mexican government also sent her troops to hold that region. In April, 1846, the Mexican soldiers crossed the river and attacked a small ditachment of American soldiers. Sixteen American soldiers lost their lives in the fight. When the news of the attack on American forces reached Washington, President Polk sent a war message to the *Congress*. He declared that the Mexicans had "shed American blood on American soil." He told the Congress that in spite of his earnest efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement, the war had been begun "by the act of Mexico herself." Thus encouraged by the president, the Congress promptly declared war and voted funds for military activities.

**The Course of the War**

The United States had little difficulty in winning the war. "She had more vigorous and enthusiastic soldiers, more competent generals and above all better guns and equipments." The American generals like *Taylor, Kearny* and *Scott* brought credit to the U. S. by their brilliant victories. President Polk had planned a three-fold attack on Mexico, New Mexico and California. The American forces under General *Taylor* crossed the *Rio Grande* and won a decisive victory over the Mexican army at *Buena Vista*. Before long, another American General *Stephan Kearny* captured *SantaFe-Trail* without a flight. Taking advantage of a revolt in California, General *Kearny* succeeded in establishing U.S. control in *California*. In spite of these losses and failures Mexico refused to make peace. But, General *Winfield Scott's* attack on the city of Mexico, turned out to be a mortal blow to the Mexican pride. *Santa Anna*, the Mexican president retired into exile. Then the war came to an end in 1848.



**The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848)**

After a short period of negotiations, the *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* (1848) clossed the hostilities between the two countries. According to the terms of the treaty Mexico accepted the *Rio Grande* boundary and ceded *New Mexico* and *California*, including all the territory that lay between them to the United States. The United States in return made a cash payment of 15 million dollars to Mexico and took up the responsibility of clearing the Mexican debts to the American citizens. It was an expensive peace as the Victor agreed to pay a huge sum of money to the vanquished by way of compensation.

**Result of the War**

As a result of the Mexican war the U. S. acquired about 10 million square miles of new land. Her boundaries extended far as the Pacific in the West and Central America in the South. It led to the signing of the *Clayton Bulwer* Treaty (1850) with Britain for the purpose of constructing the *Panama Canal* to improve the transport facilities to the Pacific coast. The war gave an opportunity to Abraham Lincoln to emerge as a national hero with his spot resolution. The treaty added to the United States a colony of religious refugees—*Marmons* who had once left the U.S. and settled beyond the *Great Lakes*. Above all after the Mexican war, the annexation of new territories intensified the problem "*Slavery or Non-Slavery*." It gave rise to sectional conflict which eventually dragged the nation into the whirlpool of the civil war.

**James Polk-Estimate**

James Polk was one of the greatest presidents of the United States. His main concern was expansion and he accomplished all his major objectives during the period of

his administration. He settled the Oregon question by peaceful means. He secured permanence for the annexation of Texas and took New Mexico and California after suppressing the pride of Mexico. Polk was able to fulfil two important promises of his party on domestic affairs. In accordance with his Jacksonian convictions, he brought about the re-establishment of the independent treasury and the reduction of tariff. He restated the *Monroe Doctrine* and extended it to prohibit European diplomatic interference with American affairs. Polk did not seek re-election to the presidency.

---

## CHAPTER XV

## THE CIVIL WAR 1861–1865

The American Civil War which was fought between the Northern States and the Southern States, marked a significant event in the history of America. In spite of territorial expansion and material prosperity, the United States in the middle of the 19th century presented "the picture of a house divided against itself." The fued and friction between the North and the South eventually led to the outbreak of a great Civil War.

There are two main schools of interpretation regarding the causes of the Civil War. According to some scholars economic factors were mainly responsible for the clash



between the North and the South. On the contrary some other scholars attributed more importance to moral issues and considered slavery as the chief cause of the conflict. In the light of these conflicting views, it is essential to analyse the main events and circumstances which led to the outbreak of the Civil War.

### 1. Economic causes

There were fundamental differences between the economic system of the North and that of the South. The North and the East were noted for their industrial and commercial outlook. There the businessmen pleaded for protective tariff, Federal aid to the development of transportation and control over the banking system. In other words they wanted to influence the whole national economy for their own advantage. In population and wealth, the North had marched ahead of the South. The North was almost self-sufficient. America's main deposits of minerals were located in the Northern states. The well-organised financial structure as well as the well-developed transport facilities enabled them to make a great deal of commercial advancement.

But, in the South, the chief source of wealth was the cotton crop. There the aristocratic planters were engaged in agricultural activities. Slavery was inextricably interwoven into the social fabric of the South. The Southern interests clashed with the interests of the Northerners in many ways. There was no industry in the South to demand protection. As they wanted to get manufactured articles cheap, they pleaded for low tariff. The South in general being a debtor region stood for flexible and lenient banking laws while the Northern capitalists favoured strict and rigid banking laws. The Southerners strongly protested against the extravagent expenditure of Federal funds for

*internal improvements* in the North. There was also a wide range of difference in the views of the North and the South with regard to the public land policy and westward expansion. Thus in all essential aspects the southern planters lost understanding with the capitalists of the North.

**Difference between the North & the South**

Commenting on the economic differences, between the North & the South C. P. Hill says "At the bottom, the Civil War was a conflict between two parts of the U. S. A. in which utterly different ways of living had developed. Most Northerners followed one set of ideals, most Southerners another, and the two set were contrary to each other. The Civil War was a clash between two groups of people who were thinking, and living in very different ways, a clash between two civilizations. In the words of Bertrand Russell "The conflict between the North and the South was a clash between two radically different conceptions of social organism. The North believed in political equality; the South believed in the essential subordination of the manual labourer, who should be of an inferior race. The Northern conception was modern seeking prosperity for all through the mechanical inventions; the Southern conception was antique seeking prosperity for a few through slave labour. To the northern mind slavery and democracy were incompatiable. The South belonged to the past, the North belonged to the future." Hence the conflict between them was natural and inevitable.

**Slavery and Sectional Conflict**

According to the other group of scholars, the question of slavery was the main cause for the outbreak of the Civil War. Slavery, which had its genesis from the days of colonisation in America had been creating problems to the



United States from time to time. It had its economic, moral and political arguments. While the South considered *slavery* to be an essential part of its Cotton Culture, the Northerners looked up on it as a moral evil. Apologists for slavery and its opponents worked equally hard to justify their positions. Basis to the pro-slavery arguments was the notion that the Negro was an inferior race. They quoted the Bible to support the idea that some people were fated by their natures to do servile labour for superior races. The proponents of the South's *peculiar institution* also pointed out that U. S. Constitution explicitly noticed slavery and therefore, it could hardly be considered alien to the American panorama.

The opponents of slavery charged that it was a tyrannical institution, the existence of which frustrated the American dream of human equality as manifested in the Declaration of Independence. The popularization of the democratic ideal which proceeded in the first half of the 19th century made the idea of slavery increasingly repugnant. The biblical arguments in support of slavery were answered with the *New Testament* charity texts and the historical fact that slavery withered away in a Christian atmosphere. As for economic reasons, the enemies of slavery cited figures to prove that voluntary labour was more productive than forced labour.

**Abolitionist Movement**

From the time of the first *Congress*, petitions to abolish slavery had been submitted. The early antislavery movement had won its first victory in 1808 when the *Congress* prohibited the import of African slaves to the United States. After that, the *Quakers* started a movement for the gradual emancipation of slaves. But it was ineffective and the Southern planters never apologised for

the institution of slavery. The *Abolitionist movement* in the North became militant in the 1830's. Then the American *Anti-slavery society* led by William *Lloyd Garrison* declared that a moderate approach to the question of slavery was a "compromise with evil." Garrison was an extremist "who combined the fanatical heroism of a martyr with the Crusading ability of a successful demagogue." In the first edition of his antislavery newspaper *The Liberator* he stated that there should "not be any union with the slave holders. He denounced the United States constitution as "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell." Garrison's vigorous propaganda and sensational methods convinced the Northerners the evils and cruelty of the slave system. Soon, a number of *Abolionist societies* were organised in the North. They helped runaway slaves to take refuge in the North and in Canada through the *Underground Railroad*. The Southerners raised their voice against the abolitionist assistance to the runaway slaves and demanded the interference of the Federal Government to safeguard their *property rights*.

**Influence of literature**

Some of the literary works of the period also helped to intensify the annti-slavery attitude in the North. Eminent writers like Emerson, Lowell and Longfellow expressed their extreme hatred of slavery through their literary works. Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* deeply influenced the Northern public opinion against slavery. The book aroused millions by its vivid portrayal of the injustice and cruelty inherent in the slave system.

**Southern Reactions**

The unbridled activities of the *Abolitionists* provoked the slave owners of the South. They could not bear the



Abolitionist propaganda which described them as *criminals* and *cruel task masters*. They feared that the abolitionist propaganda might lead to slave revolts. So the southern states prohibited the Abolitionist literature in their territories. It naturally increased the ill-feelings between the North and the South.

**The Wilmot Proviso**

The moment the Texas question and the Mexican War made huge annexations of South Western territory, the slavery quarrel entered upon an acute phase. David, Wilmot, a Pennsylvanian Democrat, attached to an appropriation bill, a *proviso* declaring that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in the territories acquired from Mexico." The *House* passed the *Wilmot proviso* but, the senate rejected it. During the next few years the Southerners and the Northerners vehemently debated on the question of slavery extension. John Calhoun, a champion of the South argued that the Congress had no legal right to ban slavery from any part of the U. S. territory. The Northerners on the other hand asserted that congress was entitled to ban slavery from any part of its territory, exercising the constitutional right to "make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory of the U. S." Thus a constitutional issue was bound up with the question of slavery. In the election of 1848, the Democratic Party was badly divided over the question of slavery extention in the new territories. The northern anti-slavery group formed a separate party of their own called *The Free Soil Party* which shouted the slogans "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labour, and Free Men." In the midst of the Democratic division, the Whig presidential candidate, General Taylor, a War hero, won the election.

**Compromise of 1850**

While heated debates were going on the question of *Wilmot Proviso*, New Mexico and California were placed under military rule. The discovery of gold in California soon, caused a largescale migration of people to that region. So the Congress could not delay the provision of a State Government in California. Hence, President Taylor advised California and New Mexico to draft their constitutions and to apply for admission in the American Union as States. Accordingly they drafted constitutions in which they banned slavery from these territories. These developments greatly angered the Southern States that some of them even advocated immediate secession from the Union.

In this crisis, Henry Clay and Stephen Doughlas put forth a few proposals which halted the explosive sectional conflict temporarily. These proposals in the final form came to be known as the compromise of 1850. They provided for (1) the admission of California to the Union as a free state. (2) the creation of the territories of *Utah* and New Mexico, without any legislation either for or against slavery, (3) the abolition of slave trade in the district of Columbia. (4) and the establishment of a strong and strict *Fugitive Law*, providing for the capture and return of runaway slaves. For three short years the compromise seemed to settle nearly all differences. But, it was only a calm before the storm. A series of events hastened the inevitable catastrophe of Civil War. They were the New Fugitive Law, the Kansas Nabraska Act, the organisation of the Republican party; the Dredscot decision of the Supreme Court' Lincoln Douglas debate, John Brown raid and the election of Lincoln to the presidency in 1860.

**1. The New Fugitive Law**

The new Fugitive law which was part of the compromise



of 1850 deeply offended the Northerners. No sooner was the law enacted than the North was invaded by Southern slave captors. Commissioners were appointed in the regular courts to deal with the cases of fugitive slaves. The negro slaves had no right of defence. Sometimes even free negroes of the North were captured and produced before the commissioners. The decisions of the commissioners were arbitrary. A law which openly favoured the South offended the Northerners. Emerson described the New Fugitive law as filthy enactment. Some of the abolitionists declared the disobedience to the New Fugitive Law was obedience to God' Some of the extremists captured the slaves from the custody of commissioners and attacked the slave hunters. The Abolitionist monks freed run away slaves from prison. Almost all northern states passed personal Liberty Laws to defeat the operation of the New Fugitive Law. They forbade the officers from assisting the slave hunters. Thus the New fugitive law increased, the tension between the North and the South.

**) The Kansas-Nebraska Act**

In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act blew the lid off the simmering pot of sectional rivalry. As the fertile region beyond the Missouri River was attracting a large number of settlers, Senator Stephen Douglas presented a bill for the creation of two territories, Kansas and Nebraska. In the final form the bill permitted the settlers to carry slaves to these territories and the inhabitants themselves were given the right to determine whether these states should enter the Union as free or slave states. As soon as the bill was passed in the Congress, a storm of indignation swept across the North, because the Act facilitated the slave-owners to settle in Kansas, from the neighbouring

slave states like Missouri. In order to counteract the domination of slave holders in Kansas, the Northern Abolitionists formed companies to finance the settlement of Northerners in that territory. Both parties established territorial governments and they began to fight each other from 1856 onwards. While the anti-slavery group received shipment of rifles from their Northern sympathizers, the slave-holders got arms and ammunitions from the South. A series of conflicts took place in which a large number of people lost their lives. As a result of the numerous acts of violence and bloodshed, the territory soon came to be called *'Bleeding Kansas.''* In the words of C.P. Hill, "The Kansas war which lasted for several years was preliminary to the Civil War." According to H. B. Parkes, the Kansas Nebraska Act proved to be one of the most catastrophic political blunders in the history of America."

### 3) Formation of the Republican Party [1854]

The Kansas—Nebraska Act caused great indignation and popular dissatisfaction in the North and the West. There the *Anti-Nebraska* men of all parties united to oppose the extension of slavery into the territories. The Whig party which had straddled the question of slavery expansion, now sank to its death and in its stead arose a powerful new organisation, the *Republican Party*. Combining the bulk of the former Whigs with some of the Democrats, particularly those most closely identified with the liberal Jacksonian tradition, the Republican party represented both Northeastern business interests and western farming interests. Most of the *free-soilers* and the anti-slavery Democrats joined the new party. In 1856, the Republican candidate *John Fremont* contested in the presidential election. Although he lost the election, the



new party attracted a large number of people in the North and the West. The top leaders of the Republican party, *William Seward* and Abraham Lincoln showed great skill and marvellous logic in attacking the system of slavery. Thus the emergence of the Republican party and its uncompromising attitude towards slavery caused great anxiety and resentment among the Southern slave holders.

### 4) The Dred-Scott Decision [1857]

In 1857, the supreme court published its decision on the famous case of *Dred Scott* vs *Sandford*. Dred Scott was a negro slave of *Dr. Emerson*, an army surgeon in Missouri. He was taken to the free-states of *Illinois* and *Wisconsin* by his master and then brought back to the slave state of Missouri. In 1846, Scott sued for his liberty in the Missouri Courts holding that he had become free because of his stay in free states. Failing to get justice in the state courts, Scott fled his suit in the supreme Court with the backing and blessings of the Abolitionists. The case involved three major issues (1) Whether Scott was a citizen of Missouri (2) Whether his temporary stay on free-soil had given him any title to freedom (3) and whether there was any legal or constitutional basis for the Missouri compromise. The Supreme Court headed by the Chief Justice, *Roger B Tarney* declared that Scott had no right even to bring the suit on the ground that no Negro could become a citizen of the United States. The Court affirmed that the Congress had no power to prevent slave-owners from taking their slaves to any of the territories. Hence Scott's temporary stay on the free-territory had not made him free. The Court also declared that the Missouri compromise was unconstitutional and slavery was legal in all U. S. territories. While the Southern

states welcomed the decision of the supreme court, the Northern Abolitionists made use of the opportunity to attack the judiciary with all force. Thus the *Dredd Scott decision* of the Supreme Court poured more oil into burning fire of sectional conflict.

**5) The Lincoln-Douglas Debates**

The rise of Abraham Lincoln as a popular and prominent leader of the Republican party posed a new threat to the Southern States. Lincoln believed in the promotion of liberty, equality and fraternity among all the races of the United States. He was an independent thinker as well as a gifted orator. In the Illinois Senatorial election as the Republican candidate, Lincoln contested against Stephen Douglas who championed the cause of *popular sovereignty*. Lincoln began his election campaign with the remarks "A house divided against itself cannot stand". He then challenged Douglas to a series of joint debates in the course of which he forced the latter to announce the so called *Freeport Doctrine*. Thus Douglas admitted that the people of a territory could by lawful means admit or exclude slavery despite the Dred-Scott decision. Lincoln's speeches highlighted the moral, social and political evils involved in slavery. In the end, although, Douglas won the election by a narrow margin, Lincoln established himself as a national figure, Douglas' *Freeport Doctrine* provoked a storm of Southern criticism and he was deprived of the Southern support for the presidential nomination in 1860.

**6) John Brown Raid [1859]**

In 1859, the sectional strife reached the point of explosion by John Brown's raid in the South. He was an anti-slavery fanatic who believed that he had a divine mission to free the slaves and to punish the slave-holders. He had made repeated raids into the Southern States and



emancipated some slaves. In 1859, John Brown with his eighteen companions seized the Federal arsenal and armory at *Harper's Ferry* in Virginia and held some of the local citizens as hostages. After two days of attack Brown and his surviving followers were captured. The Southerners were horrified when they came to know that Brown was financed and supported by the Northern Abolitionists. They concluded that if the abolitionists were going to instigate slave revolts, the secession was justifiable and necessary. During the trial, Brown conducted himself with dignity and declared that his only desire was to free the slaves. He was convicted of murder, treason and conspiracy and was sentenced to death. Many Northerners greatly impressed by the eloquence of his final speech at the trial, regarded Brown as a saint and a martyr. Thus the Brown episode was of incalculable importance in widening the gulf between the North and the South.

**7) Election of 1860**

As the presidential election of 1860 approached, the Democratic party was divided on the question of slavery and each group nominated its own respective candidate. The Republican party nominated *Abraham Lincoln* as its presidential candidate. The Republican platform condemned the attempts to re-open the African slave trade and denied the authority of the *Congress* or territorial legislature to give legal status to slavery in the territories. The division among the opponents made Lincoln's election almost certain.

**) Secession of the South** 1861

The election of Lincoln ignited the fuse which set off e explosion. The Southern states had looked upon ncoln as a black Republican and a reckless leader of

the *Abolitionists*. They were greatly alarmed at the success of Lincoln. So the Southern states decided to withdraw from the Union. The initial detonation occurred in South Carolina which declared "that the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other states under the name of the United States is hereby dissolved" Other Southern states, soon followed the example of South Carolina and in February 1861, they formed the *Confederate States of America*. They adopted an Ordinance of Secession and elected *Jefferson Davis* of Mississippi as president and *Alexander Stephens* as vice-president.

**Lincoln's Declaration**

In his inaugural address, Abraham Lincoln declared that the Southern States had no constitutional right to secede. He also made it clear that the union government would not commit the first act of war and urged the Southern states to change their mind as quickly as possible. But the South turned a deaf ear and continued the policy of separation. War became a reality when the South opened fires on the forts of *Pickens* and *Sumter*. All hesitation was now swept from the minds of the Northerners. In April, 1861, President Lincoln sent the U. S. forces to save these forts. It was the beginning of the great civil war in which "the two brothers plunged in bloody warfare which dragged on for four years."

**The course of the war (1861—'65)**

During the spring of 1861, both sides raised armies and recruited thousands of untrained volunteers to fill their ranks. Jefferson Davis, the president of the confederate government exhibited excellent skill in equipping the Southern army under the able leadership of a brave General, *Robert E. Lee*. Meanwhile, the union government



under Abraham Lincoln decided to maintain the integrity of the nation through the war. The union government made use of the services of several eminent generals, among whom *General Grant* was mainly responsible for crushing the power of the South.

**Early Battles**

From the military point of view, it was the confederate government which took the offensive step early in the war. The union government had underestimated the strength of the confederate government and felt that an attack on the confederate capital, *Richmond* would bring the South to submission. So the union army made a series of invasions in Virginia. Before they could actually capture, *Richmond* the northerners had to suffer heavy casualities. The battle ended in a disorderly and panic-striken flight of the union forces back to Washington.

**Northern Strategy**

Now, President Lincoln realised that the war would last long. In order to defeat the confederacy, the Northern forces set out to accomplish three great objects; (1) to blockade the confederate ports (2) to cut the South apart first by way of Mississippi and then again through Tennesse and Georgia (3) and to capture, *Richmond*, the capital of the confederate government. In other words "the strategy of the union was to blockade the South, making her dependent on her unbalanced economic system and to defeat the confederacy in the field by cutting it into digestable portions."

**The Blockade**

In April, 1861, President Lincoln proclaimed the blockade of all Southern ports. Almost the whole of the U. S. navy remained loyal to the union and during the

war it was greatly enlarged. By 1863, the Union navy succeeded in paralysing all naval and commercial actives in the confederate ports. The blockading fleet forced the confederacy to keep thousands of men away from the major battlefields to guard the coast. *David Farragut*, a brilliant naval commander took the union fleet into the mouth of the Mississippi and captured *New Orleans*. In another adventurous expedition, he captured the fortified entrance of *Mobile Bay*. Altogether, the Navy served the Union well in defeating the South.

**War in the Mississippi Valley**

In the Mississippi Valley, the union forces won an almost uninterrupted series of victories. General *Grant* took western Tennesse early in 1862 and the union naval forces controlled the Mississippi as far South as *Vicksburg*. This opened the Mississippi for northern commerce all the way to *New Orleans*. The confederacy was broken into two and it became almost impossible to bring supplies of food.

**Set Backs in Virginia**

In Virginia, on the other hand, the union troops had in the meantime suffered a series of defeats. All the attempts of the union forces to capture the confederate capital *Richmond* were foiled by the bold resistance of the confederate army under Robert Lee. Then Mc Clellan, the union commander came forward to meet General Lee at the battle of *Antietam* (1862). After a severe battle General Lee was forced to make a retreat to Virginia.

**Emancipation Proclamation**

The battle of *Antietam* was followed by the famous *Emancipation proclamation* of president Lincoln (1863). It freed all slaves in the rebellious states of the South. The



roclamation strengthened the cause of the union and 15 housand Negroes were enlisted in the Northern army.

**attle of Gettysburg**

The climax of the conflict came in July 1863. General ee inflicted two severe defeats on the Union forces and dvanced towards Pensylvania. The Northern States were reatly alarmed at these unexpected turn of events. Before ng, a strong union army under *General Meade* faced the nfederate forces at the famous battlefield of *Gettysburg*. fter three days of hard and severe fight, the union forces on a decisive victory over the confederate army. The nfedaracy was now nearing the end of its resources.

**nal Phase**

In spite of all these losses to the confederate govern- nt, General Lee was active in the South. In this uation Abraham Lincoln was re-elected for a second rm. He inaugurated his second term appealing to his low countrymen in immortal words "with malice wards none, with charity for all" to 'do all which may hieve and cherish a just and lasting peace.' He encou- ed all his generals to end the war with victory to union. By this time General *Grant* had assumed mmand in the East. His slow but inexhorable advance *Richmond* foreshadowed the end. In spite of the bitter position of the confederate forces, the union forces netrated to the South. General *Lee* was forced to cuate the confederate capital, *Richmond*. But, the on forces barred his escape westward. General *Grant* t him a message urging him to surrender in order to vent "further effusion of blood." At last in April, 5, *General Lee* the commander of the Confederacy sur- dered to *General Grant* at *Appomattox Court House* in

Virginia. Thus after four years of fighting the American Civil War came to an end with the victory of the union.

**Results of the War**

1) The American Civil War brought about significant changes in the political, social and economic life of the country. The war strengthened the forces of national unity and gave a mortal blow to the principle of states' right.

2) The war led to the freedom of slaves in the United States. The enactment of the XIIIth amendment in 1865 abolished slavery in the country. The XIVth amendment passed a few years later, affirmed the principle of political equality for all and it gave the Negroes the right of vote.

3) The war hastened the development of large scale industries in America. In order to produce war material and other essential articles a number of factories were built in the North-east. Owing to the difficulty of getting adequate workers, mechines were largely used in the factories. Thus the United States began to develop a rich and powerful country in the world with a rapidly growing population and almost limitless resources. With the Southerners out of the *Congress*, the industrial community of the North exercised a profound influence in the affairs of the Federal government.

4) Agriculture also received a similar stimulus. During the war, thousands of pioneers continued to move westwards and they brought extensive fertile lands under cultivation. As a result there was a vast increase in the production of wheat wool and other farm commodities. As in industry, scarcity of labour caused a rapid spur in technological progress. So the farmers began to use labour saving machines and devices.



5) The war period also witnessed the rapid development of American railways. At the beginning of the war there was no railway on the Pacific coast. In 1862, the Congress passed a bill for the construction of a transcontinental railroad. With the south out of the union there was no longer much controversy about the route to be adopted. Then, the railways spread like a growing plant and began to clutch and hold all the vast territories of the U. S. into one indissoluble national unity.

6) The war also led to the revival of the National banking system in the United States. The National Bank Act was passed in 1863. While its immediate purpose was to stimulate the sale of war bonds, it served also to create a stable paper currency.

7) In addition to the abolition of slavery, the great conflict brought about other sweeping social changes. Women took a larger part in this war than in any previous one; organising military nursing and recreational facilities; promoting educational activities and raising private charitable funds.

8) According to H. B. Parkes, "the civil war legislation laid the ground work for the rapid economic expansion of the later decades of the 19th century. Thus by attempting to secede from the union, the south brought about the final defeat of the agrarian principles in which she professed to believe and the final victory of industrialism. The ideals of Alexander Hamilton and Henry Clay had triumphed over those of Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson."

# CHAPTER XVI

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN



Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States was one of the most venerated and greatest personalities in the history of the world. He has immortalised himself in the history of America as the liberator of slaves as well as the saviour of the union. In spite of the secession of the Southern states and the consequent civil war, he triumphantly led the nation maintaining its solidarity and integrity.

## Early Career

The career of Lincoln may be summed up as a transition "from the log cabin to the White House." He was born of poor parents in 1809 in Kentucky. Owing to the force of unfavourable circumstances his parents made two pioneer migrations to the west, first to *Indiana* and then to *Illinois*. Thus repeatedly transplanted, the boy, Abraham Lincoln obtained only the slightest schooling. But he had plenty of independent reading and he acquired adequate knowledge on important subjects. Born and brought up in the midst of poverty and misery, Lincoln had to work hard to earn his living. His early years found him in different occupations as wood cutter, shop assistant, surveyor and volunteer in an Indian war. As postmaster in *New Salem*, Lincoln had the leisure to study law to get admission to the bar. Then he moved to *Illinois* where he quickly obtained reputation as an outstanding lawyer.

## Political Activities

Since he came to *Illinois*, he had been very active in the state politics. He had been one of the leaders of the



*Illinois Whigs*, although apart from one term in the House of Representatives, he had not held any important office. Then he became an active worker of the *Republican Party*. A meditative and melancholy man with great fondness for telling humorous stories, he had an innate kindness and simplicity which made people like and trust him. He was a great orator and a man of character. He possessed a native shrewdness that stood him in good stead on all occasions and developed a capacity for logical thinking and for the accurate expression of his ideas. A thorough going westerner, he instinctively idealised both nationalism and democracy and he resented deeply the determination of the Southern leaders to rule the country with or without a majority or else to ruin it.

## Lincoln Douglas Debates

In the senatorial election of *Illinois* (1858) as the Republican candidate, Lincoln challenged his rival candidate *Stephen Douglas* to a series of joint debates. In the course of seven campaign debates, he forced the latter to announce the so called *Freeport Doctrine*. Though Lincoln lost the election to the senate, his speeches revealed him as a man who had thought long and deeply about the central problem confronting the country. Thus Lincoln established himself as a national figure.

## Attitude to Slavery

At first Lincoln did not share the views of the Abolitionists. Though he insisted that the Negroes had a right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness promised to all men by the *Declaration of Independence*, he believed that the extinction of slavery could only be a gradual and lengthy process. But, as the situation became acute and explosive, he came to the conclusion that the abolition of slavery was inevitable and inescapable. He had regarded

slavery as a moral, a social and political wrong and declared "A house divided against itself cannot stand." He believed "This government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free." Agitation would continue 'until a crisis has been reached and passed.' "Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it...or its advocates will push it forward until it shall become alike lawful in all states, old as well as new, North as well as South."

**Election to the Presidency**

With these lofty ideals and noble principles, Lincoln stood as the Republican candidate for the presidential election of 1860. His firmness of conviction, honesty of purpose and power of oratory enabled him to win the election in spite of the bitter opposition of the South. The Southern states felt that their 'peculiar institution' would be in danger. Greatly alarmed at the prospect of an Abolitionist majority in the Congress as well as an anti-slavery president in power, South Carolina seceded from the union in December 1860. Soon the other slave-owning states of Missouri, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas separated themselves from the union. They formed the South confederacy independent of the North and elected *Jefferson Davis* as president and *Alexander Stephens* as vice-president.

**Lincoln's Inaugural Address**

In his inaugural address Lincoln was careful not to slam the door against peaceful restoration of the union. He was firm but conciliatory towards the South. He assured the South that the rights of that section would be protected. He made it clear that he had no purpose directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of



slavery in the states where it existed. At the same time, he asserted that the Southern states had no constitutional right to secede and that the different sections were inseparably bound together by geographical and other ties that peaceful separation was impossible. He also announced that he was personally opposed to the institution of human bondage; but felt that its continued existence or suppression was a matter secondary to the maintenance of the union of states. He called upon the Southern states to change their mind and declare their loyalty to the union. But the South continued her policy of separation and war became inevitable with the attack of the South on the forts of *Pickens* and *Sumter*. So early in April, 1861, Lincoln despatched relief expeditions to these forts.

**Role of Lincoln as War President**

Lincoln was a great diplomat as well as a skilful statesman. His diplomatic attitude and great statesmanship was exhibited at all instances during the war period. As the President of the United States he had to perform three distinct functions (1) the head of the union. (2) the head of the government (3) and the Commander-in-Chief of the U. S. forces. He performed all these functions perfectly well and brought credit to U. S. presidency.

**The Head of the Union**

Since the president was the visible symbol of the union, Lincoln declared that it was his solemn duty to preserve, protect and to defend the union. As the head of the union Lincoln said "My paramount object is to save the union; and not either to save or destroy slavery." He added "If I could have the union without freeing the slaves, I would do it. If I could save it by freeing some and leaving others. I would do that also", As an

extremist on the question of union. Lincoln declared "The power confined to me will be used to hold, occupy and possess the property and places belonging to the government and to collect the duties and imposts." He never looked upon the Southern states as foreign states or outcastes. Even when the union armies were winning their last victories, he was prepared to make liberal concessions to the south in order to weld the country together as a union. Thus Lincoln's supreme service to America was the preservation of the union and the perfection of democracy.

**The Head of the Government**

According to the U. S. constitution all executive powers are vested in the president. He could appoint and dismiss the officers of the various branches of administration besides executing the Federal laws. His cabinet was somewhat heterogeneous in political complexion. The cabinet was seldom summoned during the war period. But, Lincoln was careful to get the opinion of its members individually. As the supreme head of the executive he wanted their opinions and not their approval. Against the advice of his cabinet, he ordered the provisioning of *Fort Sumter* and when the war began called out the state militia, suspended the writ of Habeas Corpus, proclaimed a blockade of Southern ports and in other ways did not hesitate to use the dictatorial powers with which he was invested. Thus the president acted as the true executive chief and policy-maker during the civil war. Though he had to use unprecedented powers, he believed fervently in democratic self-government and knew how to inspire the loyalty of his people; so that at the end he exercised the authority of a *Czar;* but commanded the complete faith of the masses. His foreign policy showed dignity, integrity and firmness. His emancipation proclamation won



European sympathy for the Northern cause and showed that peace could be established only by the abolition of slavery.

**The Commander-in-Chief**

Lincoln believed that the president as the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Navy and the possessor of the power to pardon must have complete control of the war situation. Instead of acting as a nominal civilian commander-in-chief he exercised the full powers of the supreme commander of the nation. He raised volunteers for the army and navy, sent relief expeditions, advanced loans to buy ships and ordered the blockade of the Southern ports, though these powers were to be used with the sanction of the congress. Lincoln justified his action saying that he did nothing which the congress could not do in times of peace. So all his actions were later regularised by the congress as an extension of the powers of the commander-in-chief to meet an emergency. As the supreme commander, Lincoln had the power to appoint and dismiss army officers. By way of trial and error he had to find the best men to lead the army. During the war, he dismissed several unworthy generals and finally appointed General Grant, the Chief of Staff who brought victory to the union. As the Supreme Commander, Lincoln declared "I have the right to take any measure which may subdue the enemy." So in 1863, Lincoln, as the Commander-in-Chief of the army issued his famous *Emancipation Proclamation* which freed all slaves and offered compensation to loyal owners. It was a master stroke policy. This proclamation strengthened the cause of the union and about 15,000 Negroes were enlisted in the Northern army. Though he left the details of the military operations to his generals, he never gave up his

right to be consulted, to encourage and to warn the military officers. In his capacity as the commander-in-chief, he pardoned many offenders who were convicted of serious crimes.

**On Democracy**

Lincoln was a firm believer in democracy. He opposed the secession of the Southern states as it struck a hard blow to democracy. It presented to the whole world, the question whether a democratic constitution could maintain its territorial integrity. In his famous Gettysburg speech (1863). Lincoln proclaimed his deep faith in democracy and free government. "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in civil war.....it is for us the living to be delicated here to the unfinished work.....that this nation shall under God have a new birth of freedom, and that the government of the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth." His speeches inspired the North to gain further victories in 1864.

**His Second Term**

A diplomat in the handling of both his cabinet and generals, his reelection in 1864 was ensured by the military victories of *Grant*, *Sherman* and *Sheridan*. In March 1865, Lincoln began his second term appealing to his fellow-countrymen in the immortal words of his second inaugural "with malice towards none; with charity for all" to "do all which may achieve and cherish, a just and lasting peace." He personally attended the Hampton Roads conference to discuss terms of peace with the confederate leaders. In April 1865, General Lee, the commander of

MALA COLLEGE LIBRARY



the confederate army surrendered to General *Grant* at Appomatox Court House and the war came to an end.

**Plan of Restoration**

The president had his plan of *reconstruction* based on the prompt restoration of the Southern states to "their proper and practical relation with the union." In his last public address and at his final cabinet meeting, the president repeated his plea for conciliation. Before he could accomplish his work, fate overtook him. On April 14, 1865, while he was witnessing a drama at *Fords Theatre* in Washington, he was assassinated by a confederate sympathiser *John Wilkes Booth*. Thus ended the career of the great hero who liberated the slaves and proved that the union was "One and indivisible." Lincoln lived for the nation and sacrificed his life for an ideal—the ideal of liberty based on equality and fraternity.

---

## CHAPTER XVII

## THE RECONSTRUCTION

After the bloody civil war, the victorious North faced the problem of repairing the union. Four years of war had created numerous problems to the union government. The vast Northern armies had to be demobilized and absorbed into civilian life. The swollen wartime economy was to be converted to a peacetime basis. The powers of

the National government which expanded under the pressure of war had to be redefined for the needs of peace. The hatred and antagonism which developed between the Northerners and the Southerners were to be ended by creating an atmosphere of reconciliation and friendship.

**Post War South**

The civil war had caused tremendous changes in the Southern society. Not only had the South suffered terrible physical damage, but, the whole basis of her economic life had undergone drastic changes. Its fertile farm lands and flourishing cities were laid waste by the armies. Railway lines and rolling stock were greatly damaged. Ports were devastated and steamboats were destroyed. As the confederate currency had become worthless, banks and insurance companies ceased to function. Factories remained closed and business in general came to a standstill. The emancipation of slaves and the confiscation of private property adversely affected the fortunes of many southerners. Above all the Southern leaders, the planters and professional men were deposed by the victors in retaliation for their attempt to dissolve the union.

Matching the shattered economy of the South was the disorganization of its social system. Schools and churches were closed. About 4 million freed slaves had to be taught to adjust themselves with their new born freedom. Naturally confused by their abrupt change in status, they were uncertain as to their economic future and vaguely conscious of their place and responsibilities in a free labour market. Many of them roamed the countryside swelling the ranks of vagabonds. The power of the rich planter had gone and the "King Cotton" had become a pennyless beggar. "As a hurricane wrecks and shatters



a town, the long agony of the civil war had in the end wrecked and shattered the whole life of the South."

**Meaning of Reconstruction**

The immediate post civil war years have been generally described as the period of '*Reconstruction*'. Politically, *Reconstruction* was the process of restoring the confederate states to their former position in the union. In the social sense, it was concerned with the delicate problem of adjusting race relations in the south. The political rights of the newly freed slaves and their social status were closely connected with the process of *Reconstruction*. In the economic sense, *reconstruction* included both the rehabilitation of the war-damaged south and the transformation of that region from an agricultural to an industrial economy. Thus the story of reconstruction has to be studied in relation to its political, social and economic aspects. The period from 1865 to 1877 has been described as the period of political reconstruction. But the social and economic reconstruction continued without an end.

**Lincoln's Reconstruction Programme**

The process of reconstruction was first put into motion during the civil war and the first plan of reconstruction was presented by President Lincoln. When the union troops occupied large parts of the South, Lincoln realised the vital need for re-establishing civil governments in these areas. As the commander-in-chief, he decided to begin the restoration of civil arrangements. In December 1863, Lincoln proclaimed his plan of reconstruction. It declared that (1) all confederates except the top-ranking civil and military leaders could regain citizenship on taking an oath to support the constitution as well as its

XIIIth amendment which abolished slavery. (2) Whenever in any state 10% or more of the number of people who had voted in 1860 took the oath, they could proceed to elect a state government which would be recognised by the president. Lincoln's strong pragmatic sense permeated the entire proposal. It came to be known as the *president's plan* or *Ten per cent plan*. According to this plan, three southern states – *Louisiana*, *Arkansas* and *Tennessee* set up loyal governments in 1864 Lincoln extended the presidential recognition to these state governments.

**Wade-Davis Bill**

The *Radical Republicans* were completely dissatisfied with the president's plan. They wanted to bar the former confederates from politics besides giving the Negroes the right to vote. Many of them felt that the south should not be admitted to the union until it had been further punished and shown itself *repentant* for the sins of slavery and secession. So the Radicals put forth an alternative plan in the form of *Wade-Davis Bill* in July 1864.

The bill stated that the seceded states were out of the union and that the function of reconstruction belonged solely to the congress. By its provisions, the president was to appoint for each conquered state a provisional governor who would take a census of all adult white males. If the majority of those enrolled swore an oath of allegiance, the governor was to call an election for a state constitutional convention. But, the privilege of voting was given only to those who would swear that they had never voluntarily borne arms against the United States or voluntarily aided the confederacy. This was the so-called iron-clad-oath that made past conduct instead of future loyalty the test of political life. The convention was required to put in the new canstitution provisions



abolishing slavery, disfranchising confederate civil and military leaders and repudiating the confederate and state war debts. After these conditions were satisfied the Congress could approve the re-admission of these states to the Union. As these terms and conditions were hard and unkind, Lincoln boldly vetoed the bill and disappointed the radicals.

## ANDREW JOHNSON

Andrew Johnson was unexpectedly elevated to the presidency on Lincoln's death (1865). He was "the most unfortunate and the most unjustly maligned president in American history".

**Early Career**

Johnson was a native of the Southern Appalachian region. He represented personally and politically the white farmer stock of the South. He remained illiterate till the age of twenty and he worked as a tailor before he entered politics. He became popular in politics as the spokesman of Jacksonian faith in the rights of the plain people and the preservation of the union. He championed the cause of the petty farmers against the planter aristocrats. As an ardent supporter of the union, he boldly denounced the secession of the southern states. In the election of 1864, he was the running mate of Lincoln for vice-presidentship. As president by 'accident' he commanded little popular following while as a former *Democrat* he had little support in the Congress.

Johnson was a man of courage and integrity. He was a competent administrator and a forceful stump speaker. Unlike Lincoln, he was theoretical rather than practical, dogmatic rather than pragmatic. As a Tennessean who had once owned slaves, Johnson was suspected of too

great sympathy towards the South. He showed little tact and dexterity in handling political conflicts. Although able and courageous, he often hurt his own cause by losing his temper and using violent, undignified language against his opponents. He was therefore vulnerable on several counts and his enemies made the most of them.

**Johnson's Reconstruction Programme**

Johnson proclaimed his plan of reconstruction as soon as he assumed the office of the president. Like his predecessor, Johnson believed that the seceded states had not left the union and that the process of restoration should be started by the president. He approved four Southern state governments which were set up in accordance with the *President's plan*. A general amnesty was sanctioned for all southerners who took the oath of allegiance to the union. But the high civil and military officers of the confederacy were deprived of their right to vote. For each state, the president appointed a provisional governor who was to invite the qualified voters those who had sworn the oath, to elect delegates to a constitutional convention. As conditions of re-admittance, the state convention had to revoke the ordinance of secession, abolish slavery and repudiate the confederate and state war debts. The final procedure before restoration was to elect a state government and representatives to the Congress. By the end of 1865 almost all Southern states had fulfilled these conditions and Johnson declared that the union was restored.

**Black Codes**

Though the Southern states had accepted Johnson's plan of *reconstruction*, they were reluctant to sanction equality to the Negroes who had served them as slaves. So they adopted '*Black codes*' which defined the new status



of the Negroes. While Negroes were everywhere given the right to hold property, to marry within their own race and to have the protection of laws, they were nowhere allowed to serve in the militia, sit on juries or vote. They were not allowed to carry weapons or appear in all public places. They were also excluded from all occupations except agriculture and domestic service. Negroes without steady occupations could be apprehended by local officials, fined for vagrancy and hired out to the highest bidder to satisfy the fine. To the South, the *Black codes* were a realistic approach to a great social problem. But to the North, they seemed to herald a return to slavery. The *Black codes* shattered the hopes of the radicals. They felt that Johnson's work of *reconstruction* was incomplete and unsatisfactory.

**Clash between the President and the Congress**

When the Congress met in December 1865, duly elected representatives and senators from the Southern States appeared in Washington ready to take their seats in the Congress. Under the leadership of the Radical Republicans, the Congress refused to admit them and went on to draw up an entirely new set of conditions for readmitting "the conquered provinces." They set up a *Joint Committee on Reconstruction* with 15 members to investigate the whole problem. The Congress then passed the *Civil Rights Bill* which forbade the states to discriminate against citizens on account of race or colour.

**The XIVth Amendment**

The Congress then passed the XIVth amendment to the constitution. It declared that all persons born or naturalised in the U. S. were citizens of both the United States and the states of their residence. If any state

denied the suffrage to any of its adult male inhabitant, its representation in the Congress should suffer a proportionate reduction. Besides repudiating the confederate war debt, the former confederate leaders were forbidden from holding any state or Federal office. These laws were passed much against the opposition of President Johnson.

**The Congressional Election of 1866**

The mid-term congressional elections of 1866, saw the president and the *Radical Republicans* campaigning against each other. By the effective use of the *Bloody Shirt* the *Radicals* scored an overwhelming victory. With more than 2/3 majority in both houses of Congress, they could now put through their programme in spite of presidential vetoes.

**Impeachment of Johnson**

As a mark of their victory, the *Radicals* first set out to deprive the powers of president Johnson. In defiance of the constitution, the president was reduced to a mere figure head and the complete control of the government was transferred to the Congress. By the *Tenure of Office Act*, the president was prohibited from dismissing civil office holders without the consent of the senate. *The Command of Army Act* took away the constitutional powers of the President as commander-in-chief. Johnson decided to test the constitutionality of these acts. He deliberately violated the *Tenure of Office Act* and dismissed the Secretary of War, *Stanton*, who had always been a trouble maker as well as a fellow traveller of the Radicals. Soon, president Johnson was *Impeached* by the congress on 11 charges including violation of the *Tenure of Office Act*. After a trial of eight weeks, the senators gave their verdict. The vote fell one short of the 2/3 majority



needed to remove the President. So Johnson remained in office. But, the Republicans did not nominate him for the presidential election of 1868.

**Radical Reconstruction Programme**

The *Radicals* passed several *Reconstruction Acts* in March 1867. These declared that (1) no lawful government existed in any of the Southern states except in Tennesse. (2) The south was divided into five military districts which were placed under Military officers who were responsible for protecting life and property. These officers were given the duty of setting up new state governments in which Negroes should be guaranteed the right to vote.Southerners who had helped office under the confederacy or "given aid or comfort" to the enemies of the U. S. lost the right to vote. Under these arrangements, new state governments were to be set up whose constitutions were subject to the approval of the Congress. The last great achievement of the Radicals was the enactment of the XVth amendment. It declared that 'the right of a citizen to vote could not be denied or abridged on account of race, colour or previous condition of servitude.' One by one the southern states did everything that the Congress demanded. Thus by 1870 they were all back in the union.

**Results of Reconstruction**

**Political Changes**

As a result of the reconstruction, new state governments came into existence in the South. As the former confederate officers and government officials were not allowed to vote or hold office a new group of officials rose to power. The majority of the governors, senators and representatives elected were Northern men who had gone to the South to make their political fortunes. The

Southerners called them '*Carpet baggers.*' In addition to them a number of Negroes and Southern whites were elected to the legislatures. The Southern whites who co-operated with the *Carpet baggers* were called *Scalawags.* They were more opportunists than humanitarians. Most of these new officials had little experience in administration. A number of *Carpet baggers* and *Scalawags* misused their offices and made money for themselves dishonestly.

The Southerners in general were greatly alarmed at the growth of corruption as well as the domination of *Carpet baggers* and Negroes in the affairs of the South. Seeing their old civilization threatened and finding no legal remedy to stop the new regimes, they resorted to extra-legal means. They organised secret societies such as *Ku-Klux-Khan* and the *Knights of White Camelia.* Their members wore ghostly gowns and false faces and rode about the countryside at night to frighten the Negroes, *Carpet baggers* and *Scalawags.* The growth of violence and disorder led to the passage of the *Enforcement Act* which drastically punished those who attempted to deprive the Negro of his civil rights.

The increasing severity of such laws and the steady encroachment of the congress upon the police powers of the individual states impeded the process of spiritual reconciliation between the North and the South. It also arrayed the mass of whites in the South against the Republican party as the party of the Negroes. The Southerners also blamed the Northern Republicans for many of their difficulties. So the South began voting solidly for Democratic candidates in election after election. This voting pattern continued for over fifty years and the area became known as the *Solid South.*



**Social Changes**

Though politically, reconstruction was not completely successful; much was accomplished in the social and economic fields. The new governments in the Southern States raised taxes to repair war damage, rebuild railways and factories, put livestock back on the farms and build schools both for Negroes and white children. They also reorganised the judiciary and the system of taxation in order to promote equality and deprive the planter class of its special privileges. The *Freedman's Bureau* which was set up in the South provided the poor Negroes with food, shelter and medical aid.

**Economic changes**

The Reconstruction period also witnessed significant economic changes in the South. The freed Negroes found a place in the Southern economy. Owing to the heavy burden of taxes, the landlords were forced to sell their lands at comparitively cheaper rates. Most of the plantations were divided into small farms. In addition to cotton, the farmers began to plant other crops. The discovery of oil in the south-west brought increased prosperity to that area. The new, south carved an important place for itself in the nations economy.

**Other changes**

As time passed, it became obvious that the problems of the South could not be solved by harsh laws and suppressive methods. In May 1872, the congress passed a general Amnesty Act restoring full political privileges to all but about 500 active confederates. Gradually Southern states began electing members of the Democratic party to office. In 1877 *President Hayes* called back all federal troops from the Southern States. Before long the three

Republican Governments in the South were voted out of office and the Northern domination came to an end in the South. But, the South was now a region not only devastated by war but also burdened by debt caused by misgovernment and demoralised by a decade of racial warfare. After twelve years of *false reconstruction* from 1865 to 1877, real efforts to rebuild the South began. Gradually, the *New South* made remarkable progress in the fields of agriculture, transportation and industry.

NIRMALA COLLEGE LIBRARY
26818

---

## CHAPTER XVIII

# POLITICAL HISTORY FROM GRANT TO Mc KINLEY

"Political history during the 1870's and 1880's" says H. B. Parkes, "was no longer of major importance. An uninspiring series of second-rate figures occupied the presidency and most of the leading men in the Congress were equally mediocre. At no period in American history, has the moral and intellectual tone of political life been so uniformly low or have political conflicts been concerned so predominantly with patronage rather than princicle.' During this period, the attention of the people was diverted more to the industrial activities than to the political life. The political parties also lost the zeal and enthusiasm of organising the state politics. The two



parties, the *Republican* and the *Democrats* changed their features of outlook and policy according to the tunes of time. These conditions favoured opportunists and men of vested interests to occupy high positions of administration.

### THE GRANT ADMINISTRATION 1869—'77

In the presidential election of 1868, the Republicans nominated *Ulysses S. Grant*, the war hero as their candidate. He had earned reputation as 'the greatest of the Union Generals.' Grant won the election with an impressive majority.

**Character**

There was a marked decline of political idealism and a growth of cynicism and corruption during the Grant administration. Grant, the president was a pitiful contrast to Grant, the great general. As president, he showed none of the energy, determination and clear headedness that had made him a formidable military leader. He looked upon the presidency as a reward given to him for his services in saving the union. He was totally ignorant of the art of government, party politics and human relations. "Grant surrounded himself with a shady group of adventurers and was genuinely incapable of realizing that they were unworthy of holding office." His cabinet lacked men of ability and integrity. In spite of his simplicity of character and unassuming manners, he failed to win popularity as a successful President.

**Currency and Tariff Reforms**

In addition to the Southern Reconstruction, Grant had to face financial problems in the first term of his presidency. During the Civil War in order to meet the financial needs of the government, the treasury had issued *greenbacks*. The bearer of the *greenbacks* was expected

to get gold at its face value. Owing to the force of circumstances, the bearers disposed of the *greenbacks* to the creditors at a low price. Gradually all the *greenbacks* were accumulated in the hands of the creditors who forced the government to pay gold to the *greenbacks* at their face value. In order to solve the financial crisis, the Congress passed the Resumption Act in 1875 by which the *greenbacks* were to be paid by the government at their face value after 1897 onwards. Another financial question was tax-reduction. The income and excise duties imposed during the civil war were abolished in 1872. A small reduction in Tariff was also made in the same year. Pensions were extended to a number of veterans. In addition to these, a large amount of money was spent on constructive works. All these reforms were favourable to the re-election of Grant to the presidency in 1872.

**Political Scandals**

The next four years of his administration were filled chiefly with exposures of corruption and malpractices. Surrounded by professional politicians, office seekers and speculators, the president was completely at the mercy of the ruling clique. Grant remained as the figure head of the administration. The first major scandal discovered was that the organizers of the *Credit Mobilier* had distributed stock among a number of Congressmen. The *Credit Mobilier* was a company formed by the directors of the Union Pacific railroad. They borrowed double the construction work from the government and enriched themselves. This was done by extending bribes to the Congressmen and others connected with the government. When it was discovered most of the Congressmen were tackled.

The next scandal was concerned to the Treasury Department. The government discovered a *Whiskey ring*



composed of tax-collectors and distillers who had conspired to defraud the government millions of dollars of excise duties. When the conspiracy was known, quite a number of Grant's friends were caught. Even the president's private secretary, *Babcock* was involved in the case. But, *Babcock* escaped punishment with the help of the President.

Again the War Department, it was found that Indian post traders had obtained lucrative positions by bribing officials, including *Belknap*, the Secretary of War. But, Belknap escaped punishment only because he submitted his resignation and retired from the services. In addition to these major scandals, almost all government departments were honeycombed with corruption. Customs collectors took bribes from importers. Navy Department officials sold business to contractors. The Department of Interior was a happy hunting ground for land speculators. In this way there was much corruption and maladministration during the presidency of Grant.

**Civil Service Reform**

During the administration of Grant, a bill was passed by the Congress [1871] setting up the first Civil Service Commission. The Service Commission was to frame rules and regulations for the recruitment of officers. The Congress voted 25 thousand dollars for the expenses of the commission. *William Curtis* was appointed to head the first civil service commission. But, the Commission resigned, when its recommendations were ignored by the president.

**Civil Rights Act, 1875**

Grant administration was also noted for the passing of the Civil Rights Act. It guaranteed equal rights to all men in public places and in jury service regardless of

colour or race. The Act safeguarded the interests of the Negroes in the South.

**Foreign Affairs**

The foreign policy of the Grant administration was better handled than its domestic affairs. For this, the Secretary of State, *Hamilton Fish* to whom *Grant* gave almost a free hand deserves the major credit. Against England, the United States had a burning grievance which had originated during the civil war. At that time British-built confederate ships had done incalculable damage to Northern shipping. The United States pressed claims against Great Britian for the damage done to the Northern merchant marine by British built confederate raiders, including *Alabama* which had been allowed to slip from British ports. But, Britain was not ready to accept the American claims. Other differences also clouded the Anglo-American relations. Britain contended that the United States should compensate the British subjects who had suffered property losses in the shape of cotton and ships during the war. The ancient controversy of the North Atlantic fisheries and the American rights off Canadian shores had flared up again. Finally there were the *Fenians*—the Irish American crusaders who thought they could free Ireland of British rule by conquering Canada. During the *Johnson Grant* period, the *Fenian armies* harassed the Canadian border several times. Although the American government tried to restrain these outbreaks, it refused to pay for the damages committed by the *Fenians*. As a result of the tactful diplomacy and skilful negotiations of Grant's Secretary of State, *Hamilton Fish*, the U. S. and Britain agreed to settle the outstanding disputes peacefully. The *Treaty of Washington* (1871) provided for the submission of all outstanding



differences between Great Britiain and the U. S. to an arbitration commission. According to the decision of the commission, Britain paid fifteen and a half million dollars to the U.S. by way of compensation for the *Alabama incident*. On the whole Grant administration showed great skill and wisdom in handling foreign affairs.

**Last days**

After his presidency, Grant invested all his savings in a broken firm, *Grant and Ward*. Ferdinand Ward, a dishonest operator, mismanaged the affairs and plunged the business into bankruptcy. Grant, then decided to write his civil war memoirs, accepting a high royalty from *Mark Twain* who owned a publishing company. While writing the book, Grant had a severe attack of illness; but he finished the work, a week before his death.

## HAYES ADMINISTRATION

Rutherford B. Hayes succeeded Grant as the Republican president. He was born and brought up in Ohio. As governor of his native state, he made an excellent record and won the admiration of his countrymen. Hayes was neither a man of outstanding ability nor colourful personality. He was a sincere, honest and highminded man who disliked corruption and malpractices in administration. He had honest intentions to re-establish the presidential power and prestige. He took bold steps to remove scandals and corruption in administration. But, he was not completely successful in the attempt.

**Restoration**

In his inaugural address, Hayes stressed the need for solving the Southern problem. While he took care to say that the rights of the Negroes must be preserved, the most pressing need of the South according to him was the

restoration of "wise, honest and peaceful state governments". Regardless of political consequences, Hayes ordered the withdrawal of the Federal troops from the South. The reaction in *Columbia* and *New Orleans* was instantaneous. No sooner did the Republican officers moved out, than the Democratic officials moved in the offices. The *Solid South* became a reality and the military reconstruction came to an end.

**Civil Service**

Hayes' next move was in the direction of Civil Service reform. His persistent advocacy of Civil Service reform precipitated his biggest fight with the Congress. He wanted to put an end to the spoils system and to make appointments purely on the basis of merit and efficiency. But, the strength of the spoils system was so great that he found it difficult to make the executive branch to accept his policy. As part of his campaign to reform the spoils-ridden Civil Service, he removed from office two prominent officials in the Newyork Custom house. Some of the powerful senators vehemently oppossed him and persuaded the senate to deny confirmation to the new recruits. But, Hayes succeeded in carrying out his programme with the help of the Democrats. Hayes was the first president since 1850 to resist successfully the constant attempts of the *Congress* to encroach on executive prerogatives.

**The Silver Problem**

Hayes administration made an important legislation on the perennial problem of the currency. American money originally consisted of both silver and gold. As the people showed a preference for gold, the Congress in 1873 decided to abandon the coinage of silver dollars. But, the discovery of New Silver deposits in the West



and the strong demand of the agrarian debtor groups for an increase in the quantity of coins, created new problems to the government. In 1878, the *Congress* responded to the popular pressure by passing, over Hayes' veto, the *Bland-Allison Act*. It ordered the Secretary of Treasury to buy between 2 million and 4 million worth of silver each month at the market price to be coined into silver dollars. The treasury bought only the minimum quantities of silver and always showed its readiness to change silverl dollars into gold. So the country remained for practica purposes on a gold standard, in spite of the bimetallic currency. Then the value of money remained more or less steady. The *Resumption of Specie Payments*, passed under *Grant* was scheduled to go into operation during the Hayes' administagtion. His secretary of Treasury *Sherman* took measures to acquire adequate gold reserve and made arrangements for prompt payments. His measures won the confidence of the *greenback holders* and stabilised the currency system. Thus Hayes' administration sceeded in solving the complicated problems of currency and coinage.

By 1880, the United States not only enjoyed a great volume of foreign trade, but also a favourable balance of trade. Farm prices, particularly of wheat and cotton were up and manufacturers were reaping rich harvests from the markets provided by a steadily increasing population. It was under these conditions that the presidential election of 1880 was held.

**The Election of 1880**

Hayes was unwilling to seek a second term and the Republicans had no unanimity about their presidential candidate. Leading rivals at the Republican convention were *James G. Blaine* and *Grant*, the former president,

Finally, the nomination went to a dark horse candidate, *James Garfield*, a congressman from Ohio. The Democrats put up, a civil war general, *Winfield S. Hancock* as their candidate for the presidency. After the dullest election in the history of the United States, Garfield scraped through by a narrow margin.

## GARFIELD ADMINISTRATION

Garfield (1831—1881) like Lincoln was a typical product of the American frontier. Born in humble Ohio surroundings in fact in a log cabin, he worked for a short period on the Ohio canal. Garfield was almost completely a self-educated and self-made man. He was successively teacher, preacher, lawyer and politician.

Garfield enjoyed the presidency only for a short period of four months. The most interesting aspect of his brief tenure was the quarrel in the Republican party between the progressives called *Half-breeds* and the Conservatives called the *Stalwarts*. Garfield gave the important jobs to the half breeds and offended some of the party bosses. After a brief period in office, Garfield was assassinated by a frustrated job-seeker who claimed to be a *Stalwart*. The presidency immediately passed into the hands of the Vice-President, Chester A. Arthur.

## ARTHUR ADMINISTRATION

Arthur was a man of action. He was honest and did not lack ability. A number of legislations were passed during his term. He strongly supported the civil service reform and vigorously prosecuted the *Star Route* frauds in



the post office. He also tried to check Federal spending on unnecessary public works and to bring about a lower tariff. The *Pendeleton Civil Service Act* of 1833 passed during his presidency, authorised the president to provide "Open competitive examinations for testing the fitness of applicants for the public service." This was a remarkable achievement of president Arthur. The new system enabled the government to appoint men of ability and efficiency in high positions in government service.

## CLEVELAND'S FIRST ADMINISTRATION 1864–'68

In the presidential election of 1864, the Republicans nominated *James Blaine*, a Brilliant senator from Maine. The Democrats selected *Grover Cleveland*, who had been an outstanding honest reform Governor of Newyork. Cleveland also got the support of some liberal Republicans, known as *Mugswumps* who regarded *Blaine* as a dishonest leader as well as an opportunist. In spite of the bitter personal criticism and character assassination on the part of the Republicans, Cleveland won the election bringing credit to the Democrats.

### Character

Cleveland was not a man of high intelligence or remarkable ability. His economic views were as conservative as those of any Republican President. But, his courage, honesty and integrity made him a popular leader. He declared "the presidency is the people's office" and "a public office is a public trust." He insisted on honest and economical government in defiance of all political pressures.

### His Reforms

President Cleveland had ambitious plans to improve

the administrative machinery. He enforced the *Pendleton Act* of 1883 which became the *Magna Carta* of civil service reform in the United States. He protected the civil service commission which was responsible for conducting competitive examinations for selecting candidates for appointment on the basis of merit. At the same time Cleveland avoided an outright revolt with his party by allowing many unclassified offices to the spoilsmen. He vetoed hundreds of *private pension bills* which seemed to be fraudulent and excessive. He also refused to sanction Federal spending on unnecessary public works. All in all, he recovered about 81 million acres of land, which had been unlawfully occupied by rail road, lumber and cattle companies. Cleveland's first administration also witnessed the re-organisation of the Navy Department. The construction of modern steel ships led to the country's later naval excellence. The era also saw the passage of the *Interstate Commerce Act* of 1887. The act regulated rail roads in interstate commerce, it prohibited pooling, discriminatory rates and rebates and fluctuating rates. The *Interstate Commerce* Commission was to invoke the courts to enforce its regulations. Unfortunately, the defending rail road companies were able to tie up the commission in long and fruitless litigation, a weakness which waited for a later generation to remedy.

The most dramatic theme of Cleveland's presidency was the tariff struggle. The tariff rates had been steadily increasing since the days of the civil war. Cleveland inherited a treasury surplus which he described as a sign of over taxation. At the same time, farmers, shopkeepers consumers and importers were pleading for low tariff. The Southern and Western Democrats strongly supported the president to reduce the tariff. So Cleveland asked the



Congress to remove duties on goods which were not produced in America. But, the bill, embodying the president's recommendations, was defeated in the senate. Cleveland's chance of re-election was also spoiled because the Republicans for the first time openly favoured protection which made the major issue for the election of 1888.

## HARRISON ADMINISTRATION (1889 – '93)

The campaign of 1888 was the first since the civil war, was fought out on a definite economic issue. The *Democrats* re-nominated Cleveland for the presidency while the Republicans favoured an Indiana lawyer, *Benjamin Harrison*. He had a triple advantage of a presidedtial ancestry, residence in a doubtful state and a clean political record. Both parties adopted the usual fraudulent methods of the day in the election. The Republicans, received huge amounts from big businessmen to their election fund. It was one of the most corruptive campaigns in American political history. At last, Harrison won the election with a narrow margin.

Harrison was a solid, conscientious man but he lacked humour. He was a gifted orator; but cold in his personal relationship. His personal honesty was probably as unimpeachable as Cleveland's; but he lacked Cleveland's powerful nature. He was in no sense the undisputed leader of his party. *James Blaine* whom he made Secretary of State overshadowed president Harrison who became "a dignified figure head in administration."

Harrison's administration was noted for a series of important legislation. His term was probably best remembered for a continuation of the *anti-monopoly battle* which

ensued from the *Sherman Anti-Trust Act* of 1890. It f
bade the formation of *combinations* or *conspirac*
restraint of trade. It was aimed at the new in
giants especially in sugar, beef and oil. *Mc. Kinl*
of 1890 raised the tariff rates on imports to high
*Depender's Pension Act* passed in the same year ex
pensions to all *G. A. R. veterans* suffering from dis
The *Sherman Silver Purchase* Act of 1890 enhan
amount of silver purchase by the Treasury each
four and a half million ounces. Thus Harrison
about significant changes in the social and econo
of the country.

## CLEVELAND'S SECOND TERM (1893—

In the presidential election of 1892, the R
and the Democrats re-nominated *Harrison* and
respectively. The tariff was again the chie
issue. In the contest, Cleveland won the presid
a considerable majority.

Cleveland's second term was characteris
devastating depression and currency complicat
close of the Harrison administration, the con
reasury had begun to excite general alarm.
Treasury surplus which recorded the ex
ies over expenditures had almost reached
point. Faith that the government coul
*reenbacks* and treasury notes in gold was
snaken, for gold flowed steadily out of the trea
paper flowed in. The panic of 1893 caused gre
among the farmers and businessmen. Tho
people were also unemployed.

Like all earlier presidents, Cleveland di
bligated to take any measure for stimulating

Acc. No. 24818
Author EAPEN, KV
Title Study of American History Part I
Class No 973 NAU/I EAP